

Teacher's Pet

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Teacher's Pet

by [rosy_blossom](#)

Summary

Freshman athlete Shane Hollander begins an illicit affair with his older, married professor, Ilya Rozanov.

Notes

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

Chapter 1: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

Content warning: This is a fictional story with an inappropriate age-gap relationship and includes elements of a toxic relationship, revenge sex, angry sex and self-harm using sex.

Author does not endorse any aspect of this story in real life!!

Take care of yourselves, always!

Shane watched in anticipation as Professor Rozanov wrote in big loopy cursive letters on the whiteboard.

He adjusted himself discreetly beneath his desk. Why was he so turned on right now? He was in public, in the middle of a lecture on Russian imperialism in the seventeenth century. He couldn't possibly have picked a more unsexy topic to find arousing.

Being in Professor Rozanov's Russian history class was the highlight of Shane's otherwise uninspiring freshman-year schedule. He waited patiently all week for Monday and Wednesday mornings to roll around so that he could sit at the very back of the lecture hall alongside dozens of his peers and fantasize about his favourite professor.

Shane had heard the *rumours* of other students having illicit encounters with Professor Rozanov. To be fair, most people had heard those same rumours. It was an open secret amongst the student body. And Shane had been in Rozanov's class long enough to decide that he firmly believed the gossip. Professor Rozanov was a total flirt. He was handsome and charming and very well aware of both of those traits.

If the rumours were to be believed, and Shane was certain that they were, then Professor Rozanov was an incredible lover. Disciplined but also tender. Dominant yet gentle. Innovative yet consistent. Somehow, against the odds, each of his illicit student-teacher escapades appeared to have ended more-or-less amicably. There were no complaints filed

against him with the university. No one started any anti-Rozanov Facebook groups. No jealous ex-lovers wanted to see his head on a stake or watch him be pilloried in the campus square. And since no students were making a fuss about his lapses in judgment, the administration seemed to be content with letting it happen.

God, he was so fucking hot. It should violate some sort of university code of conduct for a professor to be this distracting.

His schoolboy crush on Professor Rozanov was a powerful motivator. It made Shane want to work harder and be better. It ignited the winning spirit within him that he normally only felt when he was on the ice, in the moments when his stick was cradling the puck before softly depositing it in the opposing team's net.

This is how Shane had rationalized the enigmatic sexual attraction that he felt towards the much older, much more experienced professor.

Maybe if all his professors were this handsome, he would be able to absorb the information with more enthusiasm and vigor. Then maybe he wouldn't be struggling to hold on to a B average. He only needed a C in order to be cleared to play, but he knew how easily his GPA could slip with just one less-than-stellar grade.

He simply didn't find any of his other professors attractive. He had tried to find something – anything – sexual about them to latch onto in order to keep his interest. The way their hair draped in front of their face. The presence of uneven stubble. Any badly hidden hickeys or bite marks that signaled virility. Any hints they were even mildly interested in getting laid. Any off-colour comments they made about sex during lectures on otherwise unsteamy topics. Any unprofessional glances or grazes. A tan line where a wedding ring once lived. Dress shirts that were unbuttoned far enough to show modest chest hair.

He had gone in with high hopes for his Introduction to Geology course. But sadly, Professor Hunter in the geology department did nothing for him. Shane had heard through the grapevine that he was once very suave and attractive. Maybe even more attractive than Professor Rozanov (if that was possible), and with a reputation of his own for bagging younger men. But those days had passed long ago. He had been happily married to a younger Art History professor, so the story goes, for a few years now.

What a waste.

All that to say, Shane had struck out on finding any other male eye-candy to pique his interest.

The problem was that performing well in school just wasn't that important to him anymore. Hockey was his primary focus. His only real passion. He didn't have time to waste pouring over different types of rock formations or memorizing the cell cycle. Over the winter break, he had even contemplated dropping out of Psychology and becoming a fine arts major. The only impediment to that otherwise solid plan was that he couldn't draw for shit.

If all else failed, he could always join the theatre department. Rose was always telling him that they were desperately in need of more leading men. And with his shy, boy-next-door demeanour and a chiseled athletic body beneath his Adidas workout clothes, Shane easily fit the bill. As a perk, he would also be surrounded by plenty of other young gay men who had recently moved away from home and were eager to *explore* their sexuality for the first time. Shane was certainly open to experimenting, even though he mostly seemed to prefer older guys. As far as backups go, it wasn't a horrible idea.

These days, Shane had difficulty concentrating on anything outside of his commitment to being the best Captain possible. His mind was on his team, his stats, the pressure of making the playoffs.

But on Monday and Wednesday mornings, Shane was miraculously able to tune out the rest of the world. For on those holy days, his brain was only focused on one thing. One man.

Professor Ilya Rozanov.

Shane was shaken out of his thoughts when suddenly the room went quiet.

Shit. He must have just asked the class a question. Shane was too busy living in his daydreams to notice.

A blond woman in the front row eagerly raised her hand. She was the same woman who had answered the past five of his questions, and Shane could tell the professor was growing irritated with the lack of class participation.

“Professor Rozanov,” she said to draw his attention. But he didn’t bite. He kept looking around the room for someone else, anyone else, to answer.

Shane locked eyes with his professor.

Fuck.

He looked down as quickly as he could to avoid his gaze. Then he scribbled some nonsense in his notebook, pretending to be taking notes.

When he finally dared look up again, Ilya was smiling at the woman in the front row.

“Yes Natalie,” Ilya relented.

“Peter the Great.”

Ilya surveyed the rest of the room and found a series of tepid nods in agreement.

“See that,” he asked his captive audience. “She puts you all to shame.”

Shane hated seeing other students receive praise from Professor Rozanov instead of him. In a futile attempt to hide his rageful expression, he bit down so hard on his pen that he was worried it was going to explode blue ink all over his tongue. How embarrassing would that be?

The clock struck 10 o'clock and Ilya reluctantly released the students from his grip, but not before giving one final reminder.

"Read chapters ten and thirteen for next week's class. Come prepared for a *pop quiz*," he said quietly. "But you didn't hear that from me, okay?"

Everyone quickly got up to leave, pushing through the swarms of people in the aisles to get to their next class on time.

But Shane decided to stay behind for a more private lesson.

He slowly jogged down the steps until he reached the front of the classroom. Professor Rozanov was too busy wrestling with papers to notice when Shane approached the desk.

"Ummm," Shane stuttered. "Mr. Rozanov?"

He didn't even bother to look up at him.

"Professor Rozanov," he harshly corrected.

Shane gulped. He had never spoken to Ilya one-on-one before. It was his first time being *this* close to his body. Being in his presence was already exciting, but now it was utterly intoxicating. Breathing in the smell of his aftershave was enough to make him nearly forget where he was and go feral.

Up close, Shane noticed how the front of Professor Rozanov's tie was slightly too long, and how one of the buttons on his white dress shirt was conspicuously undone, like it had popped against the prominence of his protruding pectoral muscles. His luscious golden curls rested just above his well-manicured eyebrows. He clearly cared about hygiene. Shane thought that there was no way that Rozanov didn't realize how visually striking he was. He must know the effect that he had on Shane, on their class, on practically everyone he met.

Being this close to him also meant that Shane could take in the distinct scent of cigarettes, which he had never found attractive in the past. But when it was Professor Rozanov, he oddly found this vice extremely sexy. It made him feel more dangerous and forbidden.

He was a bad role model.

“Sorry professor,” Shane took Rozanov’s correction.

“Well,” Rozanov said, crossing his arms. “Why do you want to talk to me?”

The blush thickened across the tops of Shane’s already warm cheeks. Shane stood there, powerless over his own mind, unable to form proper sentences, as Professor Rozanov looked him up and down, analyzing his body language.

Finally, his premeditated excuse reappeared at the front of his mind and quickly found its way to his tongue. “I was hoping you could go over my last quiz with me.”

It was a pitiful excuse, and to his credit, Professor Rozanov seemed thoroughly unconvinced.

“There is another class in here after this, so we cannot stay here. Come with me to my office,” he said.

He ushered for Shane to lead the way. They walked up a flight of stairs and down the length of the hallway to Professor Rozanov’s office on the third floor, in total silence. The anticipation built inside of Shane until he was nearly buzzing when Rozanov finally reached for the door.

As Professor Rozanov entered the office, he put his hand on Shane’s back for a brief moment. There was nothing perverted or erotic about it. He didn’t caress or fondle him or kiss him, or

trap him against the door and have his way with him – which Shane probably would have welcomed.

No, it was nothing like that. There was no heat to his gesture. It was chaste, and fleeting, and only served to make Shane more desperate for it.

“Sit down,” Professor Rozanov said sharply.

Shane wasted no time in complying with the command, finding the empty chair behind him and planting himself on it.

“Why do you want to talk about the quiz,” Ilya asked as if he were confused by the request. “You got one of the best grades in the class.”

The corners of Shane’s lips curved into an almost-smile. “Really?”

Professor Rozanov began patronizing him. “Yes. Do you want a pat on the back? Sticker?”

Shane shrugged. He was suddenly very aware of how his body was slouching in his chair. He heard his mother’s voice in his head telling him to *straighten up*. Normally, as a highly skilled athlete, he had excellent posture. But something about the way he felt in Professor Rozanov’s orbit made his body want to cave in on itself.

“You did very well on the quiz, Mr. Hollander. You must already know this.”

The way Rozanov said his name made every hair on Shane’s body stand at attention as he waited on the edge of his seat for what exactly he would do next.

Somewhere in the back of his mind, Shane knew that he must have aced the quiz. Even though it was only worth a measly ten percent of his overall grade, he had never studied so intently for anything in his life. He’d memorized the entire history of the Russian Federation

from the founding of Moscow until the fall of the Russian empire, and it only took him approximately a quarter of the allotted time to finish answering all the questions.

Then Shane noticed it. His graded quiz, sitting proudly atop of the pile of his classmates far inferior quizzes. Professor Rozanov peeled it away from the others on the pile and handed it to him. As Shane took the edge of the paper, Rozanov's fingers grazed his. He figured that it was unintentional.

At the top of the page on the left-hand side read “A+” in red handwriting. Shane wanted to frame it. Not because of the grade, but because it was something that Rozanov had touched while thinking about him.

“There you go,” he said. “Happy? Do you feel better? You can breathe easy now.”

Shane nodded and Ilya eyed him suspiciously, like he couldn't quite figure out why he had stayed late just to get his quiz back.

“Yes,” Shane said. “Thank you.”

The professor chuckled. Shane seemed to amuse him.

“You need to relax Mr. Hollander,” he suggested. “You are freshman, yes? Just starting out life. You should be having fun, not sitting here with me in boring office talking about boring quiz.”

Something inside of Shane came untethered, and he was hit with a sudden wave of boldness.

“I don't find you boring,” he said before he could stop the words from pouring out.

Professor Rozanov's stare intensified, and his beautiful, bowed lips curved into a sexy, satisfied smile.

“You are excited by Russian history Mr. Hollander? That might be a first.”

Shane laughed. “Not particularly,” he admitted. “But I like the way you teach it.”

Rozanov furrowed his eyebrows, but his smile remained intact. “Oh? Is that so?”

Shane and his professor locked eyes, and both men refused to be the first to look away.

If he’d had his way, Shane would have stared into those eyes forever.

“You make it interesting,” Shane clarified.

He was being an idiot. This was so embarrassing and just plain obvious. He was going to regret this decision come next Monday. He was going to wake up tomorrow with a shame hangover.

Professor Rozanov cocked his head ever so slightly. “Is there any other reason why you wanted to talk to me today?”

Yes, of course there was. But Shane could never admit that part out loud.

“No,” he lied. “Just the quiz.”

“Well then if that is everything,” he gestured to the door, “You may go now. Have a good day Mr. Hollander.”

Shane didn’t want to leave. “Wait, I forgot, I actually have a question about the exam.”

Professor Rozanov sighed. "I'm sure it can wait. Exam is not for another three months. You will have plenty of time to ask your boring questions."

"But – "

"*But, but, but,*" Rozanov mimicked his protests. "But nothing! If you stay in this office for a minute longer, I am going to deduct twenty percent off your final grade."

"You can't do that," Shane said incredulously.

Rozanov's eyes widened at the challenge. "I can and I will. So you should not test me."

"I'll appeal it to the Department Head," Shane argued.

"Here is an assignment for you, Mr. Hollander, this time worth fifty percent of your grade." Rozanov spoke bluntly, dropping any remaining veil of professionalism. "This week, you go to party, have fun, get drunk, and get laid. Then next weekend, you must do the same thing. You are a young red-blooded Canadian man. Take it from me, you need to experience your life before it is too late. When I was your age, trust me that I was not sitting in boring lectures like mine, worrying about my grade on some stupid quiz. Learning about St. Petersburg can wait for another day."

Shane was stunned by Rozanov's suggestions. Did he think Shane was really that boring? Was he really going to hold his grade hostage unless he quote "got drunk and laid"?

Rozanov had to be breaking about a hundred different rules just by having this conversation.

"Now, if you will excuse me..."

Without even waiting the ten seconds it otherwise would have taken Shane to exit and leave Rozanov to his own devices, the man leaned back in his chair and pushed his feet onto the top of his desk with a loud *thud*. Then the professor opened his desk drawer and pulled out a pack of hidden cigarettes. When he lifted open the package, Shane saw that there were a few missing.

“This is my time now, Mr. Hollander. If you want to talk to me, you can see me during office hours on Thursday from ten to two. M’kay?”

He put the cigarette in between his teeth and grabbed a lighter from his pocket.

Shane just about short-circuited. Panicked by what he was witnessing, he asked a stupid question. “Are you sure that you’re allowed to do that in here?”

Professor Rozanov smirked and blew out a puff of smoke.

“Maybe you have forgotten, but this is my office Mr. Hollander,” Rozanov reminded him. “I can do whatever I want in here.”

I can do whatever I want in here.

The words sent a tantalizing shiver down Shane’s spine. He wasn’t sure how he was supposed to stand up without revealing the obvious tent in his pants.

Thankfully, Professor Rozanov was content to keep chastising him some more.

“Now you answer a question of mine,” Rozanov demanded. “Why do you not participate in class when you know the answers?”

Shane’s head grew heavier with lust. He couldn’t think straight.

“Nervous, I guess. I always feel like I’m going to get the question wrong.”

A silence hung over them both, but the feeling was much worse for Shane.

Professor Rozanov carefully put the still-lit cigarette in his crystal ashtray near the side of his desk. The lazy cigarette sat there, unamused, while the ember emitted a small amount of smoke into the air around them. He used his arms to propel himself up from his chair and then walked around to the front of his desk so that his shins were nearly flush with Shane’s knees.

“You doubt yourself too much, Shane.”

Hearing Professor Rozanov say his name sent a bolt of arousal straight to his semi-hard cock. He had been good up until now. But the loose fabric of his sweatpants left little to the imagination. It was one thing when he was hidden by a desk, but now, sitting face-to-face with his embarrassingly older, inappropriate crush, there was no more hiding.

Shane folded his hands.

“But,” Rozanov said accusingly. “You do not have to be nervous around me.”

“I’m not nervous around you,” Shane fought back.

“You hide yourself in the back row, far away from me,” Rozanov continued. “How do you think that makes me feel?”

Shane’s cheeks flushed a deep shade of pink as he sunk further into his chair. “I didn’t think you noticed me.”

Rozanov's ocean blue eyes burned deep holes into Shane's skin. "How could I not notice you? Sitting back there, with your cute freckles, biting your lip when you stare at me."

The state of affairs in this small, stuffy office were getting a bit too intense. Shane certainly felt it, and he had to imagine that Rozanov did too. He noticed that the older man had to turn away and compose himself. Shane tried his best to shake off these dirty, inappropriate feelings and bring himself back down to earth.

"You are very – you are an excellent student," Professor Rozanov said, correcting himself part way through his glowing review. "There is no reason for you to be worried."

Shane nodded in quiet agreement. "It's just that there's a lot on my plate right now, with hockey and school and everything. I have to keep my grades up in order to play."

He was probably saying too much. Professor Rozanov didn't care about his future hockey prospects.

But to his surprise, for the first time in their discussion, Professor Rozanov seemed genuinely sympathetic to whatever Shane was clearly going through. "It is good to do certain things just for yourself, sometimes."

Professor Rozanov leaned over and touched Shane's knee with an open palm. Not a mere pat or graze. He held it there for a good three seconds. Shane resisted the instinctive urge to jerk away.

Perhaps sensing some hesitation on Shane's part, Rozanov backed off.

"If you ever do decide that you want to do something for yourself," he continued. "You can call me. I have plenty of helpful ideas."

Like what?

Shane audibly scoffed. “How would you help me?”

Before Professor Rozanov could answer, Shane felt his phone buzz in his pocket.

“Sorry,” he apologized, reaching in his pocket to put the phone on silent. That was terrible timing. Rozanov was just about to -

Rose.

He had completely forgotten in his lust-drunk haze. She was waiting for him after class. They were supposed to grab lunch before heading out to see a friend in their opening matinee.

There was probably a flood of texts awaiting him ranging from mildly hangry to pure rage.

“I have to go,” Shane said. “I have... class soon.”

Professor Rozanov looked vaguely disappointed, but he didn’t bother to push back on yet another of Shane’s unconvincing explanations.

“I’ll see you in class, Mr. Hollander.”

Shane left Professor Rozanov’s office and walked on autopilot until he reached Rose’s locker. As he maneuvered through the halls, certain moments from the past ten minutes kept replaying in his head.

The cigarette hanging from Rozanov’s beautiful mouth. His icy Russian stare. The feeling of his hand on Shane’s knee.

He remembered Rozanov saying something about his freckles. He must've imagined that part.

He approached an angry-looking Rose, leaning against the locker.

"Where the hell were you? I've been waiting here forever."

The reality was closer to twenty minutes. But on an empty stomach, twenty minutes felt like an eternity to Rose.

"I'm sorry. I had to ask Professor Rozanov a question and lost track of time," Shane said innocently.

Rose's eyes lit up in the way they always did when she got excited. "Oh really? Is that all," she said sarcastically. "Just a private study session with the hottest professor on campus?"

"Yeah, pretty much." Shane answered her question literally, pretending not to notice her insinuations. "I just wanted my quiz back. He takes forever to mark things."

She wiggled her eyebrows. "He's probably too busy having sex."

Shane shook his head. "Yeah probably," he agreed.

Her eyes darkened. "I have a friend..." Rose started.

She looked both ways down the hall as if they were being watched. But Shane knew that everyone was too wrapped up in their own lives to care what him and Rose were talking about.

She lowered her voice and leaned into her words.

“Last spring, my friend took a class with Professor Rozanov,” Rose continued. “Let’s just say that he’s a *very* good teacher.”

She winked and Shane rolled his eyes.

“Okay, calm down.”

“Are you calling my friend a liar?” Rose asked.

“No, I’m sure she’s telling the truth.”

Rose smiled mischievously.

“My friend is a guy. Rozanov goes both ways you know,” Rose informed him.

That was possibly the best news that Shane had heard all year, but he couldn’t possibly let Rose know that.

“You know,” Rose said with a smile. “I never understood why you took a class on Russian history. It just didn’t make sense to me. But now I see why.”

“And why’s that,” Shane asked, testily.

“You want to bang him,” she observed.

Shane's mouth was agape at the allegation. "Ew, no I don't," he proclaimed without a hint of sincerity. "He's old and married. It's gross."

"Everyone thinks that you're this pure little virgin," Rose laughed. "But it's all a lie. You are such a slut. Just admit it, you want him."

"You're crazy," Shane deflected. "And I'm not even a virgin."

"You slept with girls," Rose clarified. "You've never been with a guy. And since you're gay, that makes you a virgin."

Shane couldn't argue with Rose's incredibly sound logic.

"Yeah, that's definitely not how it works."

"Trust me," Rose assured him. "You should ask Professor Rozanov to pop your cherry. It's well past time."

Shane's cheeks burned red. "Don – don't say his name out loud. Someone could hear you."

"Half of this campus has slept with Rozanov," Rose reminded him. Shane didn't love the reminder of how notorious his professor was for banging his students. It made Shane feel dirty. Like he was just another one of many in a sea of meaningless conquests.

"I'm sure it's not *that* many people," Shane said.

"Close enough."

“Aren’t you hungry?” Shane directed Rose’s attention to something more pressing – her appetite.

“Starving,” Rose confirmed. “And you’re paying for dessert since you made me wait.”

“Fine.”

Shane spent the next couple of days lost in his thoughts. When he laced up his skates for practice, he missed a loop. When he got on the ice, he missed two passes and nearly tripped over his own feet.

Was this what sexual frustration felt like?

He needed to find a way to get this out of his system. Maybe Rozanov was right, a party wouldn’t be such a horrible idea.

Chapter 2: Shane

“Cover the virgin’s ears,” Hayden said brashly, directed at Shane.

The rest of the group laughed. Shane did not.

“I’m not –”

Shane cut himself off. There was no point in arguing with them.

Rose gave Shane an apologetic kiss on the cheek.

“It’s not his fault,” she defended his honour. “It’s called compulsory heterosexuality. Ever heard of it?”

“You took one women’s studies class,” Hayden pointed out. “You’re not an expert.”

Rose’s jaw dropped and a look of offence crossed her oval face.

“Actually, I am an expert in women,” Rose declared. “I know much more about women than you. I am a woman, for one. And I’ve probably slept with more women than you.”

Hayden scoffed. “More than Shane, maybe.”

“Hey!” Shane reacted. “This is between you two. Don’t drag me into it.”

Rose and Hayden's ongoing frenemy-status was a source of Shane's recent headaches. They were total opposites in every way but one - they both loved to argue.

And for some reason, they both seemed to care a lot about him.

Rose grabbed Shane by arm. "That's why we're here tonight," she proclaimed to the room much louder than Shane would have liked, "to get Hollander laid."

"Whoa whoa whoa," Hayden said. "I thought we were here to get drunk."

"There can be multiple reasons for partying," Rose clarified.

Despite Rose's excitement over finally getting to be Shane's designated wing-woman, he simply was not in the mood to have any real fun. He ended up spending most of the night sulking in the corner, nursing a bottle of tequila, watching Rose dance and flirt with a beautiful woman on the dance floor.

They were only a couple hours into the party and Shane was completely wasted. Not just tipsy or mildly drunk, he was full-on, past the point of no return, blackout. He knew that he was going to feel the consequences of this stupid decision tomorrow, and the pre-hangover anxiety was only making the situation worse.

He needed to find a place to puke, and fast. On his way to the bathroom, he encountered a smitten Hayden and Jackie, making out on the stairs, in full view of the other guests. They hadn't been dating very long, but Shane's roommate hadn't been sleeping in their dorm in over a week. So Shane thought that it must be somewhat serious.

"Whoa," Hayden said, unlocking his lips from his date long enough to glance up at him, "You okay bud?"

Jackie scanned Shane's flushed face, looking increasingly concerned. Jackie was a sophomore majoring in nursing and was rather good at taking care of people in crisis - like

Shane was currently. From his limited interactions with her, Shane had noticed that she had a very maternal, nurturing energy.

Shane was clinging to the bannister for dear life. The room was spinning. He tried to nod in response to Hayden's question, but even the slightest motion made him feel sick.

"Let's get you home," Jackie offered. "Help me with his arms."

Shane slung each arm over Hayden and Jackie's shoulders, and they set out to make the five-minute trek back to Shane and Hayden's dorm in the dark.

By the time they finally reached their room and successfully made it through the door, Hayden was carrying Shane - all one hundred and eighty pounds of him - in his arms, bridal-style. He flopped him onto his bed and covered him in his duvet.

"On his side," Jackie instructed. "In case he throws up in the middle of the night. We don't want him to choke."

"Good thinking," Hayden said with praise. "You're so smart, nurse Jackie."

"I'm not a nurse," Jackie corrected. "I've just dealt with a lot of drunk people."

Shane's body was alternating between burning-up and shivering. At the moment, he was cold, so he pulled the covers up to his neck.

"Aww Shane," Jackie said sympathetically, taking a seat on his bed.

"Get some rest, okay? You'll feel better tomorrow."

Hayden interjected. “No he won’t.”

“Shut up,” Jackie sniped.

“Hey man, I’ll cover for you at practice tomorrow,” Hayden promised.

Fuck, he forgot about practice. Just another thing he’d fucked up.

He was pretty out of it by that point, but he could still vaguely hear Jackie and Hayden bickering in the corner of the room.

“Are you going to tuck me in too,” Hayden asked hopefully.

“No,” Jackie rebuffed. “We should stay. We can’t leave him like this.”

“But —” Hayden protested.

“Jesus,” Jackie whispered, not realizing that Shane was still awake. “Your best friend is blackout drunk. We can —” she lowered her voice even further, “—*fuck* any other night. But right now, he needs us.”

Shane heard them both retreat to Hayden’s bed, and he was visually assaulted by the light of the laptop screen. They were watching Netflix and babysitting him because he was too drunk to safely leave alone.

Shane shut his eyes tightly and prayed that he would wake up and the events of the last few days would have been a horrible dream. Being drunk, making a fool of himself at the party, ruining his friends’ plans, coming onto Rozanov, all of it.

“Knock knock,” Rose’s voice wandered in from the doorway. She was carrying two brown cups in her hand, which Shane recognized from the only decent coffee shop on campus.

“I brought coffee to sober you up,” she said, as if she was the guardian angel of hangovers. She sat down on the edge of the bed and pushed the damp hair out of Shane’s sweaty face. She took a whiff of his scent and nearly gagged. “Oh god, Shane. Take a shower please.”

“I’m so stupid,” Shane whined into his pillow.

“You are not stupid,” Rose said firmly. “Don’t talk that way about my friend.”

“You shouldn’t be my friend,” Shane said. “I’m a loser.”

Rose was not having any of this self-pitying talk. “Oh yeah, of course. Shane Hollander, Captain of the hockey team, is a loser. You’re right, I can’t possibly be seen with you.”

She plucked herself off the mattress and Shane got scared that she might actually leave. Instead, she placed the coffee cups on the side table, and ripped the duvet cover off of Shane’s body, leaving him freezing.

“Hey,” Shane objected.

“Get up,” Rose demanded. “You have class in an hour.”

Shane turned over in bed so that he didn’t have to face her.

“I’m not going,” Shane said. “I’m dropping that class.”

Rose grabbed his shoulder and started wrestling him, until she gave up. “You big baby,” she said. “You are not dropping that class part-way into the semester. It will ruin your GPA. And besides, I thought you liked Rozanov.”

“I do,” Shane said, turning around to face her. “I think I like him a little too much.”

Then Rose realized something. “Oh my god,” she said, almost bursting. “That's why you refused my help last night. You're saving yourself for Rozanov.”

Shane blushed, which was fairly easy considering the amount of alcohol that was still in his system. “I am not *saving myself* for anyone. It's just a stupid crush. I'll get over it eventually.”

“You know what they say. The best way to get over someone...” she trailed off without a conclusion.

“What,” Shane asked cluelessly.

“Is to get under someone else,” Rose finished. “You've really never heard that expression before? Jesus, Shane, you kill me.”

“Whatever,” Shane mumbled.

“Don't get snippy with me,” Rose said. “Is that why you were being so weird the other night? Did something happen between you two...” her eyes lit up. “Oh my god Shane, did you kiss him?”

Shane spoke into his pillow, muffling his words. “Not exactly.”

Rose wiggled her eyebrows. “Not exactly? Can you not remember if you guys did or not?”

Shane shut down her speculation before she could go any further. “We definitely didn’t. But I think we were going to... It was headed in that direction until I stopped it.”

“Oh my god,” Rose exclaimed. “How could you not tell me about something this monumental?”

“What do you mean? We didn’t even kiss.”

“But you would have, right?”

Shane didn’t know what he would have done if the opportunity had presented itself.

“I think so,” he reluctantly agreed. “Probably. Yes. But it doesn’t matter anymore because I definitely scared him off for good.”

Rose smiled knowingly. “I’m sure that’s not true,” she assured him.

Shane wished he had Rose’s confidence. “I practically recoiled when he touched me,” Shane said, ashamed of how he’d acted during their meeting. “He probably thinks that he made me uncomfortable.”

“So show him that he didn’t,” Rose said, as if it were just that easy.

“How,” Shane asked for some of Rose’s sage wisdom.

Rose grabbed her coffee from the table, brought it to her lips and took a sip.

“Sorry,” she said. “I can’t help you with everything. I think this is something you’re going to have to figure out on your own.”

She checked the time on her phone. Shane was going to be late if he didn’t hurry up.

“Chop chop.” She clapped her hands together. “You need to take a shower and get dressed.”

“Ugh, fine.”

His clothes from last night were bunched up on the floor. He must have been really drunk if he hadn’t bothered to put them in the laundry basket.

Shane paused what he was doing. “Are you going to stand there while I get dressed?”

“It’s nothing I haven’t seen before,” she shrugged.

“And afterwards we both realized we were gay,” Shane teased. It was a good sign that he was awake enough to make jokes.

“Thank god for that,” she said. She kissed him on the cheek. “I gotta get going anyway. I have rehearsal in a few hours and I’m still not off book yet.”

“Good luck,” he said.

“Are you sure you’re going to be okay,” she asked again.

Shane glared at her until she got the hint.

“Fine, I’m going. Call me later.”

Shane yanked on some raggy sweatpants and an old hoodie, hoping to be as inconspicuous as possible for the next sixty minutes.

His heart beat in tandem with each one of the professor’s heavy footsteps on the sturdy hardwood floor. He didn’t know if he could survive an entire semester of sitting in this classroom, hapless and partially erect, while Professor Rozanov taught them about the October Revolution.

The clock in the upper right hand corner of his laptop blinked: **9:59 am.**

Almost done.

Only one minute left of this hell. Shane counted down the seconds until this sweet torture was officially over and he could go back to his dorm, slide underneath the covers and fall asleep again.

Other students began to put their books and computers in their backpacks in a mad scramble to get to their next class on time.

“Mr. Hollander,” Professor Rozanov called out to the back of the room. “Can I see you for a moment, please?”

Well, fuck.

Shane hadn't directly spoken to Rozanov since their aborted liaison in his faculty office. Shane was hoping to avoid him outside of class hours.

If he could have pretended not to hear him, he would have.

He cautiously made his way to the front of the room, dreading being forced to have this conversation.

"Yes," Shane said passive-aggressively. "What did you want to see me about?"

Rozanov's lips curved into a devilish smile and Shane's heart sank into his stomach cavity.

"I wanted to ask you how your assignment is coming along?"

Shane was confused. He wracked his brain to think about what Rozanov could possibly have meant by that comment. There were no more assignments in the course until the final exam.

"What assignment?"

"Do you not remember our meeting in my office?" Rozanov furrowed his brow. "I gave you an assignment and I want to know how it is going."

Oh, that assignment. Shane felt flustered suddenly.

He shook his head. "You were serious about that?"

"Of course," Rozanov said.

Shane didn't think that Rozanov was expecting bi-weekly reports on his progress. He didn't want to tell him that his one attempt to have fun had been a miserable failure.

"Well, I went to a party," Shane said, trying to seem proud.

Ilya gestured for him to continue.

"And?"

Shane shrugged. "And nothing. I got drunk."

"That's all," Rozanov asked, suspiciously. "There were no girls there?"

Shane winced. Why was his professor so interested in what he had gotten up to last weekend?

"Yeah," Shane said. "That's all that happened. I passed out in my dorm and woke up with an awful hangover. Thanks for that, by the way."

"You are welcome," Rozanov said sarcastically.

They both stared at each other for a moment. Then Shane looked around the empty lecture hall. "Is that all you wanted to say to me?"

Ilya shrugged one shoulder. "I thought you might have more to report, but –"

"But?"

His tone became serious all of a sudden. “Did you think about what I said,” Rozanov asked. “About doing something for yourself and nobody else.”

The buzzing in Shane’s head had reached a fever pitch. He couldn’t think straight whenever he was around Professor Rozanov. He had so many things that he wanted to say to him. But every time he tried to open his mouth he turned into a bumbling idiot.

Rozanov waved a hand in front of his face. “Shane? Where did you go?”

“I’m here,” Shane said, planting his feet firmly on the floor and looking Rozanov straight in the eyes. “I’m right here.”

Rozanov glanced at the closed door, and then moved in closer. “So, what do you think,” he asked again.

Shane bit his bottom lip. A clear tell about how he was feeling. “I... I don’t know. I think... yes. The answer is yes.”

Rozanov smiled. It was barely a smile, but Shane noticed it.

“Come with me,” he said. “I want to see you in my office.”

Shane was pretty sure that he knew what that meant. Professor Rozanov's office was the only place that they could be completely alone. Where they weren't at risk of other students or faculty members walking in and disrupting them.

This time around, Shane already knew the way to Rozanov's office. They silently ascended the steps to the third floor, and Shane noticed that they were both moving rather quickly, like they were rushing to get there. Occasionally, Rozanov would look over at Shane and just observe him.

Rozanov used his key to unlock the door, and Shane followed closely behind. He was half-expecting Rozanov to put his hand on his back like last time. But he didn't.

As soon as Shane closed the office door behind him, he was pressed up against it. Rozanov's fingers were grabbing at the back of his head and pulling him into a messy kiss.

"Wait," Shane said. "What about –"

Rozanov kissed him, hard enough to make Shane swallow his words. Hard enough to make him forget what he was going to say in the first place.

"Stop talking," Rozanov said when he pulled away.

"But I thought –"

"Stop thinking," Rozanov instructed. "We are not in class anymore. You do not need to think."

Shane closed his eyes and let go. He wanted to let Rozanov use him however he liked.

"Fuck Hollander," Ilya mumbled against Shane's lips.

"Mmmhm."

"I did not think I would see you in my class again," Rozanov admitted through heavy, drawn-out breaths.

"I wasn't going to come back," Shane said.

“Why did you?”

Shane wanted to say something sexy and confident and self-assured. But all he could come up with in the moment was, “I needed to see you.”

Rozanov quietly mumbled something that Shane presumed was Russian.

“Where do you want me? On the desk,” Rozanov suggested. “Or on the floor?”

He was probably just teasing about that last part. The carpet was filthy, having absorbed the stench of cigarette smoke and Shane’s own desperation. Besides, it didn’t look like it had been properly vacuumed in a while.

Shane used all of his remaining strength and dignity to push Rozanov away. He stumbled backwards a little and licked his lips.

“Fuck you,” Shane said. Immediately followed by, “Desk.”

They spun around, and Rozanov used his body to maneuver them towards his desk. He hooked Shane’s legs under him and lifted him up so that he was sitting on the edge, never letting their lips separate for longer than a few seconds.

Rozanov undid the knot at the top of Shane’s sweatpants, and tugged his black joggers down past his knees, finally giving him unimpeded access to the lower half of his body.

For a few moments, he rubbed his hands along Shane’s stomach and chest, admiring his physique. Then he used both hands to pull his boxers down, and Shane’s hard cock sprang out as if it had been patiently waiting for the chance to break free. Rozanov gave his cock a parting kiss, before gliding his tongue up Shane’s pubic bone, and taking each one of his nipples in his mouth, circling them with his tongue before sucking on them.

Rozanov glanced up at Shane and then down again. “Mmmh, is this all for me,” he asked with an arrogant smile.

Shane would have protested, but he was too far gone to feel any embarrassment. “All for you,” he moaned.

Rozanov finally let his hand grasp Shane’s leaking, neglected dick.

“Is this what you want?”

“Yes please,” Shane said, politely.

Rozanov chuckled. “Okay, since you ask nicely.”

He took the tip of Shane’s penis in his mouth, and ran his tongue over it in a circle, savouring the salty taste of his skin and the small beads of pre-come that were beginning to form.

“So good,” Shane murmured words of encouragement. “Yeah, like that.”

Rozanov seemed pleased with himself.

Then, without warning, he dropped his head lower, spreading Shane’s cheeks wide open and positioning his face at his entrance. He gave an exploratory lick to Shane’s hole, before spitting directly into him, using his finger to spread the saliva around.

“Wait,” Shane said anxiously, reaching for Rozanov’s hair. But he was too slow. “Where are you going?”

Shane had spent the morning vomiting his guts out, and even though he'd showered afterwards, he hadn't been anticipating... this.

Rozanov grabbed the underside of Shane's thighs and pushed them upwards, until they were almost over Shane's shoulders. Shane was extremely flexible, but he was not used to being contorted into pretzel-like shapes on the edge of a desk.

"Hold your legs back."

Shane took the instruction like the good student he was trying to be.

Rozanov swirled his tongue around Shane's entrance, moving swiftly and confidently. He kept the same, familiar motion for a couple of minutes, allowing Shane to acclimatize to the feeling. After a while, when Shane's body had started to naturally relax, Rozanov began flicking his tongue up and down, stimulating nerve endings that Shane didn't know existed.

Had he done this before, Shane wondered. Of course he had.

"Oh god," Shane exclaimed. "I've never – oh god."

Rozanov removed his lips for a quick second to check in. "Good?"

"Better than good," Shane said. "Holy fuck. How –"

"Practice," Rozanov said. "And," he circled Shane's rim with his index finger, "I am naturally gifted."

"I can see that," Shane agreed. "Fuck. That was amazing."

“It is not over yet,” Rozanov said, pressing his finger against Shane’s hole, but not quite pushing it inside. “Not until I make you come.”

Shane shuddered and then nodded. “Are you going to...”. He didn’t know what exactly he was asking for. He hoped that Rozanov would know.

“We will do whatever you want,” Rozanov assured him.

That’s the answer that Shane was afraid of.

“I don’t know what I want,” Shane admitted.

Rozanov licked his bottom lip. “We start slow, okay? This time,” he said as if he was already anticipating a follow-up session, “I only use my tongue.”

“Umm,” Shane stuttered, waiting for his brain to catch up to the situation his body was now in. “Can we try, like, fingers too?”

Rozanov smiled and resumed massaging Shane. “You sure you feel ready for that?”

Shane blushed a deep shade of pink. “I’m ready,” he said with a competitive glint in his eyes.

“You tell me if it is too much,” Rozanov said firmly. “And we stop.”

Shane moaned and nodded.

Rozanov grabbed Shane’s chin so that he was forced to look at him. “Use your words,” he commanded.

“Yes,” Shane said, clearly. “Yes, yes.”

His head dipped back down and continued what he had been doing, quickly working his way back up to the point they’d been before they paused.

The sounds of Rozanov’s tongue lapping at his hole became wetter and Shane felt like a pervert having to listen to the sounds of his moans echo in the empty room.

Shane was making noises that could best be described as a cross between a yell and a cry.

“Shane,” Rozanov said, pulling away and wiping off some of the fluids from his lips . His mouth was red and slobbery and his eyes had gone dark. “We need to be quiet. People might hear.”

Shane didn’t know if he could stay quiet. Not when he was receiving the most glorious rimjob of his life.

“I promise,” Shane said anyway. “Keep going.”

“Say please,” Rozanov demanded.

“Mhmm, please.”

“Okay sweetheart,” Rozanov said. “Whatever you say.”

Sweetheart.

Before Shane could think about his use of the term too deeply, he felt Rozanov's finger knocking tentatively at his entrance again.

"Now," Shane demanded. "I'm ready."

Thankfully Rozanov didn't make him wait any longer. He slid his finger inside of Shane with little resistance, found his prostate with ease, and curled his finger against it. He began moving at a devastating pace, ensuring that he hit the same spot with every new motion. Each time he did, Shane shrieked with pleasure.

"More," Shane pleaded. Rozanov obliged, pressing another slicked-up finger inside, continuing the rhythm.

The second finger seemed to do the trick, because a couple seconds later Shane was moaning and thrusting up into the air involuntarily.

"Right there," Shane encouraged. "That's — oh fuck."

Shane had never managed to come from this type of stimulation before. He could never quite get the angle or the pressure just right. But there was a first time for everything, and that particular first happened to be today.

He clenched around Rozanov's fingers, and gave his dick a couple firm strokes before he was coming all over his own hand and stomach.

Rozanov patted Shane's thigh, and slowly put his legs down so that they were dangling over the desk again, not quite reaching the floor.

"Sit up," Rozanov said.

Shane reached for a tissue from Rozanov's desk, but Rozanov stopped him. "Nuh-uh," he said. "Good boys don't leave a mess."

Shane hadn't realized how much he enjoyed being spoken to this way. The praise mixed with degradation.

Rozanov ran his fingers - the same fingers that, moments ago, had brought Shane to orgasm - through Shane's fresh, hot come that was smeared across his torso, and brought them to Shane lips.

"Open for me," he demanded.

Shane did more than just open, he devoured Rozanov's magic fingers, sucking on them until they were perfectly clean. He could taste himself, his come, his skin, all mixed together on Rozanov's digits.

"You're so... wow," Shane said, in pure amazement.

Rozanov smiled. "You are still out of it. Don't worry, it will pass."

It won't, Shane thought to himself. This feeling will never pass.

He pulled up his boxers, followed by his pants, and tied them tighter around his waist.

"When can I see you again," Shane asked, too high on dopamine and adrenaline to care how desperate he sounded.

Rozanov backed away, his cocky smile turning to a tight-lipped frown.

“You do not want to do this with me,” Rozanov told him resolutely. “You are a nice kid, Hollander. The last thing you need is to get mixed up with someone like me.”

Shane wondered if this was a tactic he used with all of his students turned lovers. He would give them a taste of how good the sex was, and then make them beg for it. Maybe Rozanov wanted to make him feel like this whole thing was solely Shane’s idea. Shane’s responsibility.

“Why not,” he asked, sounding more desperate than he’d hoped. “This was perfect. You were amazing.”

Rozanov gave him a quick peck on the lips. Shane leaned in for more, but Rozanov stopped him.

“Today was a one time thing,” Rozanov said. “It was for *you*. But if we do it again, it will be for *me*. And you might not like it as much.”

Shane didn’t understand what Rozanov was proposing. “Trust me, I like doing this. A lot,” he said for good measure.

Rozanov smirked. “I am not like the other men you have dated, Mr. Hollander. I am more... aggressive.”

“Aggressive,” Shane repeated, questioning his use of the word. The one and only time they’d done anything sexual, Ilya had been exceedingly, mind-numbingly gentle with him.

“I like obedience,” Ilya clarified. “Submission. It is a stereotype, I know. But I like to be the teacher.”

Shane felt a deep burn in his lower belly.

“You want to teach me how to submit to you,” he clarified, eyes widening as he imagined all the opportunities for Ilya to mold him into the perfect lover.

“Yes,” Ilya confirmed. “But only if you are sure that this is what you want.”

And with that, Ilya crossed the room, closing the space between them until Shane could feel Ilya’s warm breath on him.

“Do you still want?”

Shane nodded softly. “I still want,” he said without hesitation.

Rozanov held out his hand. “Do you have a phone?”

Shane felt around in his pocket, withdrew his phone and handed it to Rozanov.

“Here,” he said. “Now you have my number. First lesson is going to be on Friday night.”

“Friday?”

That was two whole days away.

“If you still want –”

“Yes,” Shane said eagerly. “Yes, I’ll be there.”

“Good,” Rozanov said smugly.

“But what about...” Shane looked down at the wedding ring prominently displayed on Rozanov’s left hand.

“I keep a separate apartment for things like this,” he said nonchalantly. “Buzz and I will let you in.”

What does one wear to get schooled at their professor’s secret sex apartment, Shane pondered.

“What if I had plans,” Shane said cheekily.

Rozanov lightly slapped Shane's ass. “Cancel them. I’ll see you at eight.”

Chapter 3: Shane

“You did what!”

Rose’s excited squeals were echoing across the restaurant and drawing unwanted attention to their table. Shane awkwardly smiled at someone from his philosophy seminar who happened to be walking by at the worst possible time.

He turned his attention back to Rose. “Keep it down, would you,” Shane chastised.

“On the desk,” Rose asked again, scandalized. She had already spent the past half hour making him pour over every last lurid detail of his office rendezvous.

“I already told you —”

Rose shook her head. “I was too shocked the first time to fully absorb everything. Tell me again,” she begged. “Don’t leave anything out.”

Shane had to put his foot down. “I’m not telling you again.”

“Prude,” she said. Shane kindly flipped her off. “Are you going to see him again? Outside of class.”

Shane stalled by taking a generous bite of his oatmeal raisin muffin. It tasted disgusting. Had the food here always been this bad?

“Friday,” he said through loud chews. “Why did we come to this place again?”

“Because it’s close to my next class,” Rose said with a grimace. Shane swallowed his bite. “Stop deflecting.”

He repeated his earlier answer. “I’m seeing him on Friday.”

“That’s tomorrow,” Rose said, as if that meant something.

“Yeah,” Shane agreed. “So?”

Rose looked him up and down and Shane knew that she was scrutinizing his outfit.

“Do you plan to wear...” she paused for dramatic effect. “That?”

Shane was post-workout and wearing a pair of sweatpants with their university’s logo on the thigh that he’d received in a welcome package during orientation along with a sticker and a shitty mug.

Shane rolled his eyes. “It’s just a hookup,” he downplayed it as best he could. “Should I wear a three-piece suit to get railed?”

“I just want you to look presentable,” Rose said, being a good friend the only way she knew how. “This is a big deal.” She got all mushy, “You’re finally growing up.”

“It’s really not a big deal,” Shane said, visibly blushing. “And besides, it’s not like I’m going to be wearing any clothes for very long.”

Rose looked proud of her friend at that moment. Even though she was only a few months older than him chronologically, she was wise beyond her years and she treated Shane a lot like a little brother. She had three brothers back in Minnesota, so she was rather accustomed to the sister-role. As an only child, Shane was used to being a lone wolf. Rose could sense that he needed guidance and mentorship. She was more than willing to provide it.

She shook her head and her face split into a smile. “I can’t believe I’m actually about to say this, but I think I’m jealous of Shane Hollander’s sex life.”

It was a shocking state of affairs when Rose Landry, known campus womanizer, was jealous of Shane and his pitiful roster of disappointing hookups.

“What happened to that one girl?” Rose had been seeing someone at the beginning of January, but Shane couldn’t seem to remember her name. “Emma... Emory?” He was pretty confident that her name was Emory. “Yeah, Emory. What happened to Emory?”

Rose sighed and dumped a giant glob of ketchup onto her plate of uneaten french fries.

“They’re called *women* by the way,” she said bluntly. She picked up a fry and held it in her hand like a pencil, occasionally pointing it at Shane as she spoke. “And nothing happened. It just fizzled out. She was kind of boring.”

“She seemed nice,” Shane said absentmindedly. He was too busy imagining all the complicated positions he was going to be pressed into tomorrow night.

Rose pursed her lips and elaborated. “She was weird about cleanliness stuff. I always had to brush my teeth and floss before she would let me kiss her. And she never wanted to go down on me...” she smiled subtly. “Kind of like you.”

“Well at least I had a good reason,” Shane joked.

“Yes, you’re forgiven,” Rose acknowledged. “Even though objectively, eating pussy is much better than sucking dick. I’m not even saying that as a lesbian. I’m saying that as a human being who appreciates not having a sore throat and lock-jaw.”

When it came to carnal matters, Rose had always been crass and bold, even when she and Shane briefly dated. She had given him plenty of lessons on female anatomy, which unfortunately, would not serve any real purpose except to take up valuable real estate in his brain.

It was one of the many things he appreciated about her personality. She balanced him. She was the ying to his yang.

Rose harshly pushed her tray away from her and towards Shane.

“You have to help me with these,” Rose said. “I can’t gain any more weight before opening night. They’ve already done the fittings and everything. And if they have to let the seams out even an inch, I would never live it down.”

“You look perfect,” Shane told her honestly. He always thought that Rose was the most beautiful woman he’d ever met, other than his own mother.

The sides of Rose’s mouth tugged upwards. “You really were the perfect boyfriend,” she said with a hint of nostalgia for something that never really was. “Always telling me how beautiful I was, how thin I was—”

“You are all those things,” Shane affirmed.

Rose’s sharp blue eyes lit up. “Make you a deal,” she said, in a more serious tone. “If neither of us is married by the time we’re thirty—”

“Thirty-five,” Shane interrupted. “We already made this agreement, remember? At that holiday party with the fake drunk Santa Claus?”

Rose lightly hit her forehead. “Duh,” she said. “Right, I forgot about that. So we’re still on for thirty-five then?”

Shane could think of worse things than being a trophy husband in an open lavender marriage with his best friend. Especially because he was confident that, fairly soon after graduation, Rose would find the right role to launch her into stardom and they would probably end up working in different countries most of the time anyway. Rose could become a dual citizen, or alternatively, Shane could get his American citizenship, and they could buy a series of beautiful houses in cities across North America.

And he did truly love Rose as a person. Just not romantically.

Shane figured that romance was such a small part of relationships anyway.

They would be rich and happy and never have those annoying couple-y problems like fighting or jealousy or who was supposed to take out the trash. They could just enjoy each other's company, much like they did right now.

More importantly, if either one of them ever got sick, they would legally be able to make decisions for each other. He was probably too young to even be thinking about such things, but playing a competitive, aggressive sport meant that he could get drastically injured at any time. As much as Shane loved his parents, they had each other, and they wouldn't be around forever. And now Hayden had Jackie. From Shane's vantage point, their relationship seemed to be progressing at lightning speed. He hadn't seen Hayden sleep in his own bed in almost two weeks now. One day after class he'd casually mentioned that they were talking about going to visit her parents in Victoria over spring break.

Yes, Rose was *his* person. She was his other-half. His platonic soulmate. No one else could even come close to what they had.

After they came out to each other but before they officially broke up, Shane and Rose had rationally discussed why it might be a good idea to stay in the relationship for appearances-sake only. Shane knew that it was unlikely that he would get drafted if he was public about his sexuality. Even though most of his teammates knew, Shane sometimes felt like they were just pretending to be supportive because he was the Captain. Maybe they were just going along with it until they didn't have to pretend anymore.

But he couldn't ask Rose to hide in the closet with him forever. It wouldn't be fair to her. And Shane wasn't entirely in the closet. He had one foot out... and part of his shin too. Maybe even the whole leg.

It's just that the closet was so comfortable. He had spent years decorating it, making it nice and cozy and impossible to leave. It was all he had known his entire life. Ever since was six and he'd begun to notice how boys and girls held hands on the playground. He remembered the sinking feeling in his gut when one of his mom's friends asked him if he had a girlfriend yet. He was only in first grade, but he already felt the immense pressure to conform to a masculine ideal that he could never quite fit into. Being an athlete in a highly competitive sport that valued uniformity above standing out, only made the pressure exponentially worse.

Rose was far more comfortable about being out in the open. When she finally accepted who she was, it was like a beast had been unleashed. Watch out! Shane had once witnessed her make out with three different women at one party in the span of fifteen minutes. Rose and her roommate, Lily, had a tally on their fridge of the number of conquests Rose had taken back to her dorm room in first semester (the answer was twenty-two, which according to Shane's informal calculations, was just over one woman per week), as well as the number of times Lily had walked in on Rose with her fingers inside of another woman's vagina.

The last time Shane had bothered to check the count, she had graduated to double digits. When he pointed out the crass double-entendre, Rose high-fived him.

Although she was raised in a conservative family and she was the only daughter, she had taken some of the pressure off when she disappointed her parents by going into theatre instead of something more lucrative or steady, like accounting. When Rose eventually told him that she had nearly sent in her application for the actuarial program, he laughed in her face. He couldn't possibly imagine Rose crunching numbers behind a desk all day or helping people with their taxes. It would be a complete waste of her talents.

"Shane," Rose said, waving a hand in front of his face. "Don't leave me hanging."

She spit her ketchup-drenched saliva into her hand to shake on their deal.

“Gross,” Shane said, wincing, before spitting into his own hand and smushing their fluids together. “Deal.”

Rose pulled away first, wiping her hand on a half-dirty napkin. “I still think we should do a blood pact,” Rose said.

“No blood pact,” Shane said. “That’s a hard boundary.”

Rose pushed her luck. “Matching tattoos?”

“I’ll tell you what,” Shane offered. “If we do get married, I’ll get a tattoo with you at the reception.”

“Fine,” Rose conceded. “Don’t think I’m going to forget about this in sixteen years. You better be ready.”

Shane was certain that Rose would remember. Almost as certain as he was about the fact that Rose would find an amazing woman to settle down with long before the clock ran out on their deal.

Shane stepped into the grey-tiled shower and closed the curtain. He peeked his arm out of the stall and slung his pristine white towel on the hook outside. The shower was cold and still damp from the last person who had been there before him.

He turned the tap all the way to the left so that the water came out burning hot. He tilted his head upwards and let the water rain down directly onto his face.

After a couple minutes of acclimation, he opened the shampoo bottle from his caddy and squirted a generous amount onto his palm, working it into his scalp like a meditation. He

repeated the same routine once more, and then again with the conditioner, thoroughly washing the products out of his hair and letting water carry the sweat and dirt and debris of the past day and a half down the drain.

He still had a few more hours to kill before the date with Rozanov at his apartment, and counting down the seconds until Rozanov would be inside of him again was brutal and agonizing beyond what Shane thought possible. He had never felt this way about anyone. Not Jessica or Rose or any other girl - woman - that had the unfortunate label of being one of Shane Hollander's girlfriends.

He'd been at practice all morning and then grabbed a quick lunch with Hayden, consisting of a power bar and some salmon over quinoa. He showered in the gym after practice but the water pressure was terrible and he didn't feel like he could fully get clean.

He began to wash his entire body, methodically, splitting it into smaller parts, beginning with the upper half - his neck, arms, chest and his stomach. Then he moved on to each of his legs, using his exfoliator to remove the dead cells that had built up on the surface of his skin.

He wanted to be physically ready for tonight. For whatever could potentially happen. Whatever Rozanov decided was going to happen. He was ready to give himself over to the man, completely, without reservation.

Their last clandestine meeting had been spontaneous, impulsive and completely unplanned. And as great as it was, Shane wanted this time to be different. He wanted it to be perfect.

He knew what he was hoping was going to happen tonight. He didn't want to presume, but he needed to be adequately prepared just in case the opportunity presented itself.

Slowly, he moved his hands between his thighs and gently cleaned the underside of his balls, cradling them as he reached lower to massage his perineum. He rarely touched himself like this, but ever since he'd felt the weight of Rozanov's fingers, it was all he could think about most of the time.

He pushed his back up against the shower wall and used a combination of his nimble fingers and the scalding hot water to gradually work himself open, easily adding another finger when he no longer felt the same degree of fullness from just one.

Now that he knew what it felt like for Rozanov to touch his prostate, it was easier to find it again. It was as if Rozanov had left a map of Shane's body behind for him to read when he was alone. He knew how deep he had to go to find—

Fuck. He found the correct spot and pressed down mercilessly. It was smoother and more rubbery than he thought it would be, and even merely brushing it sent a jolt of pleasure through him that he worried may make him collapse on the floor of the shower.

This was dangerous. He had to stop himself from going further. He wasn't a Neanderthal who masturbated in the communal shower. He could wait until tonight.

He finished his unusually long shower and retrieved his towel. He wrung the water out of his hair as much as possible, and wrapped the wet towel around his waist. In the pocket of his robe, his phone was lighting up like a Christmas tree.

A text. From Rozanov.

Apartment 1410. Don't be late.

Chapter 4: Shane

Shane exited the silver Honda and gave his pleasant Uber driver a five-star rating.

He missed driving, even in the middle of the harsh Canadian winter. He envied the feeling of control when his hands were wrapped around the leather steering wheel and he could feel the road's resistance beneath his heavy tires. He had possessed a driver's license for nearly three years but he still didn't own a car. Making such a major purchase seemed impractical for the time being. Most of the time, he stayed close to campus so he didn't really need one. But this was one of the times he wished he could have driven himself, like an actual grown up.

He was standing idly in the parking lot, freezing his extremities. He was a few minutes early and he didn't want to seem too keen. Moreover, all of Rozanov's emphasis on him being on time made Shane want to be a little late purely out of rebellion. He wanted Rozanov to realize that he had a life too. He had plenty of other places that he could be right now.

He could afford to make Rozanov wait.

It was his last chance to run. To let that one singular experience in Rozanov's office stand alone. To keep their liaison as a memory he could think back on fondly when he needed an image to latch onto at night when he was in someone else's arms. Someone closer to his own age rather than his parents' age.

But he couldn't do that. The curiosity would eat him alive.

He walked briskly through the front doors and past the security desk. A short brunette woman with a small dog was already inside and had unlocked the door with the button on her phone. She gave Shane a once-over, and then held the doors open for him too.

"Thanks," Shane said. He didn't necessarily want to share an awkward elevator ride with this stranger, so he opted to take the stairs. Better for cardio, he figured.

By the time he'd reached the fourth floor, he was a bit of a mess. The exercise had undone most of the work of his preparatory shower earlier that afternoon.

The apartment was easy enough to locate, since it was almost immediately adjacent to the stairwell. He forced himself to reach up his hand to knock on the hardwood, but before he could flick his wrist, Rozanov opened the door.

Did he have a camera or something? Could he sense his presence in the building?

Rozanov stood in the doorway, his white dress shirt untucked and unbuttoned.

"You are late," he said plainly.

Shane looked down at his phone. Technically, Rozanov was right. "It's only 8:01. And traffic was bad, and I took the stairs instead of the elevator and—"

"Hollander, I do not care for excuses," Rozanov said. "Come inside before I change my mind."

Shane entered Rozanov's secret sex apartment. It was sparse and uninviting. Like Rozanov was concerned about preventing anyone from getting too comfortable. There was one lonely wooden stool pushed up against the marble kitchen island. A fridge, which likely housed beer and not much else. A black leather couch in the living room. A flat-screen television. Old taupe curtains covering the windows. No coffee table. No rug. It was a total man cave.

He hadn't even been inside the apartment for more than ten seconds, before asking, "Where's the bedroom?" He shot Rozanov a flirtatious smirk. It's the only question that had been on his mind ever since he learned about the existence of Rozanov's secret sex apartment.

"Not so fast," Rozanov stopped him in his tracks.

He came up behind Shane, pressed himself to his back, softly kissing his bare neck, and began pulling his jacket zipper down without looking at his hands. Shane's knees nearly buckled. He desperately wanted to be touched, held, loved.

Rozanov carefully, almost sensually, removed the jacket from his shoulders, and Shane let his arms slip out of the sleeves. Rozanov found a spare hanger to store the jacket. The rest of his clothes stayed on for now.

Shane was floating on a cloud far above himself. Whatever lies he'd told himself about not seeming too eager had fully gone out the window with the rest of his dignity - which to be fair, was already hanging by a thread.

Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a drink cart with an array of fancy glasses and bottles with clear liquor.

"Will you make me a drink," Shane asked, playing the role of a consummate adult who had done this plenty of times, despite only being a few months shy of his nineteenth birthday.

Rozanov shook his head. "Not yet," he said. "Not until after we are done. I want you to be completely sober the first time."

There was a small tingle in Shane's pelvis. *First time*. It was only the first time. That implied that there would be other times.

"What are you going to do to me," he asked, wide-eyed.

Rozanov leaned in and pressed his lips to Shane's ear. "You will see very soon."

Within thirty seconds, he was pinned to the mattress, helplessly flailing under Rozanov's weight.

Even though he hadn't touched a lick of alcohol, Shane felt drunk. He vaguely recalled the blur of Rozanov chasing him into the bedroom, tackling him onto the bed and viciously attacking him with open-mouth kisses.

Shane closed his eyes. "Mmmm. Please," he begged. "Need it. Need you."

His voice broke on the final syllable and Rozanov laughed. He reached a hand under Shane's slacks, feeling his excitement. "If you are this hard already, you are not going to last long enough to have me inside you."

Shane moaned. "You do still want that, don't you," Rozanov asked, as if the answer wasn't poking at Rozanov's right hip.

It was more than *wanting*. It was a need as primitive as shelter or hunger. He needed Rozanov's cock like he needed life-saving medicine.

"Words," Rozanov requested. "Use your words, Hollander."

Shane squeezed his eyes closed. "Mmmpf."

"I do not understand this *mmmpf*," Rozanov teased. "How is my English better than yours? You do know the alphabet don't you? Vowels and consonants form things called words which make up sent –"

"Fuck you," Shane cried out.

Rozanov spitefully nibbled at the skin on Shane's neck, making him wail at the sensitivity.

“That is no way to get what you want.”

Shane knew how to ask nicely.

“Please,” he begged. “Please, please. I need you so bad.”

He inched Shane’s pants down slowly, and positioned himself in between his thighs. He took Shane’s cock in his mouth, and fuck if it wasn’t just as amazing as last time if not even better. Shane’s memory couldn’t recreate the mind-blowing sensation of Rozanov’s skilled tongue.

Once he was fully hard, Rozanov pulled himself off Shane’s dick, ejecting it and letting it flop uselessly against his flexing stomach.

Then, he sat back on the bed.

“Will you show me how you like to be touched,” Rozanov asked.

Shane flashed an uncomfortable smile. *Why would anyone want to see that?*

“Why,” Shane asked. He didn’t come to this apartment just to touch himself. He could’ve done that at home, in his own bed.

Rozanov slid a gentle hand up Shane’s thigh, careful to avoid any sensitive areas.

“I want to watch you,” he said simply.

“Do you want me to come?”

“Not sure yet,” Rozanov said. “I haven’t decided.”

The thought of allowing Rozanov to control his orgasm filled Shane to the brim with desire. But it also made him nervous and feel kind of dirty.

As always, desire won.

Shane looked at his older lover sheepishly, before giving him a mild grin.

“Lube,” he asked. “Or do you expect me to do this dry?”

Rozanov raises his eyebrows and tsk-ed his tongue. “So high maintenance,” he said sarcastically.

He hopped off the bed and went around the other side to search his drawer. He quickly rummaged around for a brief moment before finding a rectangular bottle and throwing it in the middle of the bed like a game of fetch where Shane was the puppy.

Wordlessly, Shane grabbed the lube from where it landed on Rozanov’s blankets, and squeezed the contents onto his palm. The bottle was half empty, but Shane didn’t allow his mind to dwell too long on what that detail meant.

Rozanov resumed his place next to Shane, enjoying the view, and rubbed his inner thigh while Shane got to work.

Shane couldn’t say that he entirely understood the appeal of watching another man jerk off - surely Rozanov was familiar with the mechanics by now - but he was content to do whatever he was asked.

And Rozanov wanted to watch, so Shane could at least make it entertaining for him.

“Happy now,” he asked the older man.

“You have no idea,” Rozanov said, squeezing the meat of Shane’s thigh. “Is this how you normally do it when I’m not around?”

Shane nodded distractedly. “Yeah, most of the time.”

Rozanov seemed pleased by his response.

“From now on,” he spoke in a low register. “Whenever you have the urge to do this, you must ask me first.”

Shane laughed a little at the proposition. The practicalities of such an arrangement seemed troublesome. He tried to point that out to Rozanov, but he was having none of it.

“What if it’s late at night?”

“Call me,” Rozanov said.

“What if I’m in the shower?”

“You get out and then call me right away.”

What if I’m with someone else? What if I’m in their bed? Under the covers. Their hands beneath my shirt. Drifting lower.

What if you're with your wife?

What if you're in the middle of fucking her? Will you stop and call me back?

“If I say yes,” Shane attempted to strike a deal, even though he was in no position to negotiate. “Will you fuck me?”

A devious expression crossed Rozanov's lips.

“Don't get ahead of yourself,” he warned. “I will tell you when we can fuck.”

All Shane's burning ears heard was that they were definitely going to be fucking at some point. Maybe not right now or even tonight. But eventually.

Shane used his head to gesture to the lube bottle. “Will you?”

“Such a princess,” Rozanov rolled his eyes happily.

“I'm kinda busy,” Shane reminded him.

Rozanov opened the bottle and held it over his active hand. “No,” Shane said. “Let me do it.” He handed Shane the bottle and Shane squirted a decent amount of lube onto his fingertips.

Then he changed his focus to working open his already stretched asshole.

His slicked-up fingers slid inside with little resistance. By the time he managed two fingers, Rozanov didn't appear to know what to do with himself. He was staring with his mouth open and his pupils blown-out.

Shane was showing off. Moaning and groaning and writhing on the bed. Fucking his own fingers like the slut that he always denied that he was.

When Rozanov didn't react verbally, Shane was worried he'd done something wrong. Moved too fast. Taken too much.

"Fuck," Rozanov growled. "You've been practising since I last saw you?"

There was an uncontrollable hunger in his voice. Maybe he wasn't as in control as he wanted to seem.

Shane felt all glittery inside. "No," he said in protest. "I just wanted to be ready for you. In case you wanted to—"

"So good for me," Rozanov interrupted. "Holy shit."

Shane was exceedingly proud of himself for anticipating Rozanov's needs. For following his directions to the letter.

He was practically glowing with pride. "I'm a good student, so."

"Such a good boy," Rozanov confirmed.

Shane questioned whether being called a *boy* in this context was slightly creepy.

"Man," Shane dictated. "I'm a man, not a boy."

Rozanov licked his lips deliciously. “Yes,” he agreed. “You are definitely not a boy. Look how big you are?” Rozanov encouraged, his gaze fixed precisely on Shane’s now-leaking cock.

He wasn’t talking about the results of Shane’s strength-training.

“Fuck,” Shane said, his hand starting to cramp. “You’re gonna make me come.”

Rozanov smirked. “I’m not even touching you.”

“The way you talk,” Shane explained. “It’s so - *fuck* - good. I feel like I’m going to explode.”

Realistically, Shane could have simply ceased moving his hand at any time. But Rozanov didn’t tell him to stop, and he was afraid that if he did something without his approval, he might not be rewarded.

Rozanov gave his permission. “If you want to come, then come.”

“No,” Shane said, gritting his teeth. “Want you to fuck me first.”

He was determined.

“I don’t know if you will last.”

“Whose fault is that?”

Rozanov’s command came shortly after. “Stop,” he said firmly. Shane removed his fingers immediately. “Get on your stomach. I’m going to give you what you want now. What you’ve been begging for.”

Shane complied, positioning himself on his hands and knees and thrusting his ass into the air to give Rozanov the best possible access.

Rozanov drizzled most of what was left in the bottle onto his dick, slicked himself up, and planted his knee on the edge of the bed. He hiked up Shane's hips to meet him, but before he could push inside, Shane said something.

"Wait, I want to see you."

No words were exchanged as Rozanov quickly flipped Shane over onto his back.

"Wanna look in your eyes while you fuck me," Shane said. He couldn't force himself to stop talking. "Wanna see you come."

Shane realized, too late, that he was saying the exact things that women used to say to him in bed. Dirty talk had always turned him off because it seemed so performative. Now he understood that it wasn't. It was possible to want something so badly that you thought you were going to combust.

"Ready," Rozanov asked. Shane had been *ready* for the past five minutes. But Rozanov wasn't asking about his body. He was asking about his mind. His heart. *Was he ready?*

Shane summoned all his strength. "Yes," he said. "I need you to fuck me."

Then Rozanov pressed himself inside and Shane ascended.

Chapter 5: Shane

Chapter Notes

bonus chapter!

Shane could feel Rozanov's warm sticky release dripping down his left thigh, marking him.

Perfect. The whole night was perfect. Rozanov was so good to him and he handled him the way only he knew how. Shane couldn't have wished for it to have unfolded differently. Rozanov knew exactly what he needed before he had to ask. He knew all the sneaky pressure points inside of him that no one else had ever activated.

Rozanov was lying on his back and struggling to catch his breath. Their marathon session had really taken it out of him. He probably wasn't used to being with men with Shane's level of stamina.

"I've never done that before," Shane admitted, snuggling closer.

"You've never come so hard," Rozanov teased.

Shane rolled his eyes. "Shut up, I'm being serious. I hadn't done that before."

Rozanov looked like he couldn't believe what he was hearing. He confirmed with Shane what he meant.

"You were a virgin?"

"No," Shane said neutrally. He didn't get defensive over the assumption.

“Right,” Rozanov said, seeming slightly disappointed that he wasn’t the first person to have Shane like this. But he shouldn’t have been surprised. Shane was good-looking and an athlete and it would have been a little ridiculous if no one else had ever wanted a piece of him.

Shane put Rozanov out of his misery. “I meant that I’ve never done that with another guy before.”

Rozanov perked up after being told that information. “Lucky me,” he said. “First man, first professor... first to make you come twice in half an hour.”

“It wasn’t twice,” Shane protested. Rozanov looked unimpressed. “...Okay fine it was twice. But only because you looked so fucking good in that sweater vest the other day. I couldn’t stop thinking about it.”

He’d jerked off to the mental image at least three times. Maybe four if he counted the shower he took earlier in the day.

Rozanov chuckled adorably. Shane was confused by that reaction because he wasn’t trying to be funny.

“So you like when I dress like a nerd,” Rozanov questioned.

“You are a nerd,” Shane replied jokingly. “A big, hunky, Russian nerd.”

Rozanov didn’t appreciate being called nerdy. “I am not the one trying to destroy his professor by wearing those slutty glasses everyday.”

Shane was incredulous at the allegations of sluttiness.

“They help me see the whiteboard, asshole!”

“Whatever you say Hollander,” Rozanov retracted the accusation. “They make you look like a sexy librarian.”

Shane opened his mouth angrily and Rozanov might have expected Shane to tell him to fuck off or to go fuck himself. But instead, Shane subverted expectations by asking a question that plagued his curious young mind.

“Have you ever had sex in a library?”

Rozanov raised his eyebrows suggestively. He definitely was not expecting that.

“Is this a fantasy of yours that I am not aware of? Librarian fantasy.”

“No,” Shane answered too quickly. Rozanov was the one who mentioned librarians, not him. “Just curious. I assume you’ve probably done it everywhere on campus.”

Rozanov played along. “Would you like me to make love to you in the library, Mr. Hollander?”

“Ew, stop it!” Shane squirmed away from Rozanov’s grip.

“Or should I say,” Rozanov purred in Shane’s ear. “Librarian Hollander.”

“Shut the fuck up! I’m serious.”

“Do you want me to bend you over in the stacks,” Rozanov teased.

“Fuck off!”

“Shhh,” Rozanov put a finger to his lips pretending to shush him. “We have to be quiet. People are reading in here.”

Shane pushed him away. “Leave me alone.”

“Is this what you want Mr. Hollander,” Rozanov kept going far past the point that Shane found it amusing.

“Definitely not,” Shane said, lying through his teeth.

“Pssst,” Rozanov scoffed. “You are no fun.”

In response, Shane rolled himself on top of Rozanov, holding him down by his shoulders. He tried to lean up and kiss him, but Shane wouldn’t let him move.

Shane lowered his head to plant a soft kiss just under Rozanov’s jaw. “Again,” Shane ordered. Once wasn’t enough to satisfy his renewed appetite. It had been months since Shane had even been naked around another person. Since Rose. That was mid-October.

He never used to get attached after sex but right now he felt downright clingy. He needed to be held almost as much as he needed to make love.

Rozanov groaned from a place deep in his throat. “Mr. Hollander, are you not tired after I deflowered you?”

Shane tapped Rozanov's face lightly. “Not even close, old man.”

“I am not old man,” Rozanov argued through a reluctant smile. “Professor Hunter is old man. I am barely middle aged.”

Shane had noticed that Rozanov was extremely ageist towards the older, tenured professors who refused to retire to make room for the new generation of academics. The irony of a man as old as Hunter giving lectures on the formation of igneous rocks was not lost on Shane. The guy probably saw the first volcano forming in real time.

“Sure you are,” Shane said in mock-sympathy. “Can you keep up? You don’t even have to move, just lie there and let me do the work.”

Rozanov’s perfect cerulean eyes rolled into the back of his head. “I have created a monster, haven’t I?”

“Shut up,” Shane chided. “I know you like it.”

“Jesus Hollander,” he sighed reverently as Shane’s hands began wandering below his waist. “How did I find you?”

“Technically I found you,” Shane said, playing with Rozanov’s thick, coarse chest hair. “When I signed up for your class.”

“Why did you want to take Russian history,” Rozanov asked, seemingly oblivious to the way Shane’s fingers were loosely stroking his cock beneath his boxers.

Shane was too horny and exhausted to waste precious energy on being dishonest.

“Because all the reviews on Rate my Professor said that the class was easy and the professor was hot.”

Shane was the one who was easy.

Rozanov burst into laughter and his laugh made Shane break too. “It’s true,” Shane said.

God, he thought. Rozanov looked so pure when he laughed. He got a glimpse into what Rozanov might have been like when he was younger. A time before he was so jaded and colourless.

The laughter eventually stopped and Shane noticed that Rozanov seemed distracted. Much too distracted for him to be when Shane was perched naked on top of him, in riding position.

“Do you have to get home,” Shane asked. *To your wife.*

Is she waiting up for you? Is she worried? Does she care where you go off to by yourself for hours?

“Soon,” Rozanov confirmed.

Shane flopped over on his side and wrapped Rozanov’s muscular bicep around him.

His warm brown eyes stared up at Rozanov pleadingly.

“Can you stay for a few more minutes?”

After what they just did, how could Rozanov say no?

“Of course,” he agreed. “Anything for you.”

Anything for me.

Shane cuddled up in the crook of Rozanov's neck and lay his head on his strong, hairy chest. It was the first thing Shane had noticed about Rozanov when he was naked - he had hair everywhere.

Rozanov stroked the back of Shane's head tenderly, and Shane's eyes fluttered open and shut in response to his touch.

"Do you have a girlfriend," Rozanov asked, catching him a bit off guard.

A small smile crept across Shane's lips. Was he jealous?

Shane snuffed out the thought before it could reach fruition. He's just making conversation. Just some light pillow talk before they retreat back to their separate lives.

But if it wasn't jealousy, then Shane didn't understand why his relationship status would matter to him when Rozanov himself was legally married to someone else. Maybe he wanted to ensure that Shane had something to lose by being with him. He needed something to hold over Shane in case things went south.

"No," Shane answered. "I did have a girlfriend for a while, but we broke up before I left for college."

Shane could vividly recall the dreaded break-up conversation last July. Jessica had taken the ending rather well. They both knew that something was off in their relationship, despite their inability to acknowledge it to each other. Even though they were good friends and got along, sex had always felt like a chore. Like an item to be checked off a list rather than an experience to savour and enjoy. They rarely fought either, which Shane used to think was a good thing. But now he realized that they didn't argue because they didn't care enough about each other to argue.

There was no passion. It wasn't real love.

They were only playing pretend. The star athlete and the head cheerleader. A match made in hell. It was a cliché and Shane was tired of the endless clichés.

“Oh,” Rozanov said teasingly. “Why did you break up?”

“You're an asshole,” Shane said, trying to hide his smile. “She was great. We just weren't right for each other. Not physically compatible.”

Rozanov hummed. “Yes, compatibility is important.”

He winked at Shane and Shane nearly melted into the mattress.

“You and I are compatible,” Shane said confidently.

“Very,” Rozanov agreed.

Are you and your wife compatible, Shane wondered.

“You're married,” Shane said, stating the obvious. Rozanov never explicitly mentioned having a wife, but he knew from the gold band wrapped around Rozanov's fourth finger on his left hand.

Rozanov glanced down at the ring as if he had forgotten he was even wearing it. “Oh that,” Rozanov said, moving his hand further away from Shane's eyeline. “Don't worry about that. Is not important.”

Shane nodded. “Okay. Sorry I mentioned it.”

Rozanov eyes softened and he pulled Shane in closer, if that were even possible.

“Do not apologize, ever. You are so perfect, Shane.” Rozanov grasped his chin and jaw with his right hand. “Look at this face. Fuck. So beautiful.”

Shane blushed and he wondered if Rozanov could feel how hot his face was to the touch.

“You do not like being called beautiful?” Rozanov asked, observing a shift in Shane’s expression.

“It’s embarrassing,” Shane mumbled.

“Handsome then,” Rozanov course-corrected. “The word doesn’t quite do this pretty face justice though.”

“Shut up,” Shane demanded.

Rozanov attacked him with a playful, sloppy kiss. He dragged his tongue across his lips and chin and nose. “Make me, Hollander.”

Shane had no idea how a man of his age was still so full of sexual energy. So he asked him.

“How do you have the energy?”

“I work out a lot,” Rozanov said honestly. “And,” he grabbed a handful of Shane’s ass and Shane bucked his hips towards him. “This keeps me young.”

“What, me? Or all the other young men you’re sleeping with?”

“Are you jealous, Hollander,” he teased. “It is not a good look on you.”

Shane bit his lip and disappeared under the covers.

“No,” Rozanov said, pulling the comforter away so that Shane had nowhere left to hide. “You do not get to hide yourself from me. I want to see you.”

Shane relented. “I think you’ve seen enough of me for one night.”

“Not true.”

Rozanov traced the outline of Shane’s soft, pink lips. Then Shane pouted and his expression seemed to send Rozanov into a frenzy. He slipped one finger inside Shane’s mouth, and Shane invited Rozanov to thrust it in as far as it would go, covering it in his warm tongue and sucking with as much enthusiasm as he did earlier in the evening.

Nothing Shane did was ever given less than the full one-hundred percent effort.

“And for the record, just so that we are perfectly clear with each other,” Rozanov softly wrapped his right hand around Shane’s chin, holding his gaze, “I am only ever like this with you.”

Rozanov’s eyes ignited with lust once again, and Shane instinctively swung his legs over the other man’s waist and climbed over him, so that he could be on top. He rolled his hips over Rozanov’s bulge. “I thought that you had to get home.”

Rozanov sneakily wrapped his arm under Shane’s thigh, flipping him over and holding his arms above his head. “Mhmm, not yet,” Rozanov said definitively. “I want to make you come again first.”

“Jesus,” Shane moaned. He didn’t put up a fight or show any resistance. He simply lay down and let Rozanov take over.

Chapter 6: Shane

Chapter Notes

i'm having a ton of fun writing this story! i hope it translates.

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Over the next week, Shane glided weightlessly across campus, flitting in and out of classrooms with ease.

Time flew by without him being aware of it.

His ill-advised procrastination was finally catching up with him at this critical point in the semester, but he was managing to get a fair bit of work done late at night while everyone else was sleeping. On Sunday, he'd written an entire two-thousand word essay in less than six hours, running on nothing but fumes and an ungodly amount of Red Bull, submitted it seconds before the deadline and ended up with a B+.

Professor Rozanov's stuffy office was where Shane lived between his classes. It was his second home. And Hayden was none the wiser, since he was always busy with Jackie. If he ever asked where he was, Shane would make up an excuse or pretend to be hooking up with his imaginary, age-appropriate boyfriend.

He'd even given his fake boyfriend a name - Joseph. Joseph was the perfect fake paramore. A laid-back philosophy major who played Oasis songs on his acoustic guitar and introduced Shane to weed.

Rose was complicit in the ruse, having aided in fleshing out Joseph's character with a sophisticated backstory. Everything was going exceptionally well until Shane's plan began to backfire when Hayden became irrationally jealous that Shane had introduced Joseph to Rose before him. Ever since, he'd been insisting that he needed to meet Joseph to "check him out" and "see if he was good enough". Shane realized that his relationship with Joseph would have to end soon.

Since his steamy date with Rozanov at his apartment, he'd been concerned that he might be developing a slight dependency. A dangerous addiction to Rozanov's cock. He needed it constantly. He even dreamed about it some nights.

There was nothing that compared to the feeling that came over Shane when Rozanov was inside of him, possessing him. Turning him inside out. Sex with Rozanov was a short-cut to resetting his entire nervous system. He was constantly upgrading. His brain had never worked this efficiently before. He was nailing his assignments and his fragile GPA was no longer in jeopardy.

His skills on the ice had also seemed to improve dramatically. Shane had scored three goals in his last game against the University of Toronto. He dominated his opponents. He was one with the puck. His coach was thrilled with his performance. If only everyone knew who was truly responsible for his winning streak.

Afterwards in the locker room, Hayden made sure to tell him that he had noticed Shane was playing better now that he was consistently getting laid.

Thank you, Joseph.

On that particular afternoon, Shane was cheating on Joseph.

He was sitting in Rozanov's chair behind his office desk and his fingers were threading themselves through Rozanov's perfect blond curls, pulling him in closer.

As if that were even possible.

He had Shane's cock trapped in the back of throat but he wasn't letting him come.

“I have to go soon,” Shane whispered. He was keenly aware of the reckless potential for being overheard. “I can’t — fuck. You need to let me come.”

They rarely went *all* the way in Rozanov’s office. It was too risky. Mostly, they sucked each other off, and sometimes, when the mood struck and Rozanov was feeling especially generous, Shane dutifully bent over the desk and got eaten out from behind.

But the waiting gave them both something to look forward to. He had already scheduled another *lesson* with Rozanov for that upcoming Friday night. It was quickly becoming a standing date. He even put it in his calendar - which was only mildly embarrassing.

Rozanov gracefully released Shane’s dick from its receptacle, leaving behind a trail of his shiny spit.

“Or I could keep you here as a prisoner,” he half-joked.

Shane wished that being Rozanov’s sex prisoner was a realistic possibility. If he weren’t so dedicated to hockey, sex prisoner would be the perfect occupation for him.

No more lying, no more deadlines, no more expectations. Just Rozanov. That’s all he ever really needed anyway,

He did his best to keep up with Rozanov’s spontaneous role-play. He was always so creative with the made-up scenarios and Shane felt inadequate and inexperienced in comparison. He didn’t want to disappoint him. Or worse, bore him.

“Oh yeah,” Shane said, having a hard time thinking of what to say when all his blood was pooling between his thighs. “You want to lock me up in here and fuck me all day? Hmmm? Chain me underneath your desk and let me blow you while you grade papers?”

Rozanov rewarded his attempt at banter by swallowing him whole again.

“Fuck Rozanov,” Shane cried. Since they’d had sex, he no longer called him *Professor*. Just Rozanov. They weren’t quite on a first name basis but it was getting closer. “I’m gonna – oh god yeah. I’m coming.”

His cock splurled hot liquid directly into Rozanov’s tight throat. He took it effortlessly, just like he always did, barely even flinching.

“That was so good,” Shane praised him, as he tugged at the waistband of his pants.

Rozanov wiped his lips with the back of his hand. “I am always good,” he said confidently.

And he was right.

Shane was still coming down from his post-orgasm high when Rozanov started making fun of the things he had said while he was having the soul sucked out of his dick.

“Do I have to go out and buy some chains for you,” Rozanov asked mockingly. Mockery from Rozanov’s mouth always sounded like flattery to Shane.

He didn’t give him the satisfaction of an answer.

“Maybe a collar too,” Rozanov suggested, circling his hand around Shane’s neck. “So that everyone knows you belong to me. Would you like that?”

Shane very much wanted to belong to Rozanov. The truth was that deep down, he already did. He belonged to him in every way that mattered.

“You can’t keep me here forever,” Shane said, smiling at the thought. Imagining it was nearly enough to make his softening cock perk up again.

Rozanov looked contemplative. “Why not,” he asked, motioning across the room. “You have everything you need. Books and cigarettes and—”

“Your cock,” Shane finished his sentence.

Maybe Rose’s sense of humour was rubbing off on him. If that were true, he didn’t mind it.

“I was going to say computer,” Rozanov fibbed. “Such a poet, Hollander.”

They were both smiling like idiots. Shane kept the fantasy going.

“What would I do all day to keep myself occupied when you’re not here,” he asked.

“Get yourself ready for me,” Rozanov suggested.

Shane was in a cheesy mood. “I’m always ready for you.”

They started kissing again for a brief moment. It was passionate, but it didn’t have enough heat to lead anywhere. It was just a kiss for the sake of a kiss.

“I think you would like to be my prisoner,” Rozanov offered his opinion. “Let me cook for you and bathe you and use your pretty little mouth whenever I want.”

Rozanov’s gaze drifted down to Shane’s lips. “God, that perfect mouth.”

Shane appreciated the vaguely-sexual compliment.

“Maybe I will kidnap you from your dorm room tonight,” Rozanov threatened.

Shane shook his head defiantly. “My friends would come looking for me,” he said.

He knew how accurate that statement was. Obviously Rose would definitely notice if he went M.I.A. for longer than forty-five minutes without checking in. If he didn’t show up at practice more than one morning in a row without a doctor's note or a good excuse, his coach would flip out. And he never missed game days. Not a single one since he'd started his training with the team last August. There would be a search party put together within a few hours.

Even Hayden would probably notice that Shane went missing after a while. Though Shane rarely saw him in-person anymore outside of hockey, they texted constantly. And he got occasional updates about his and Jackie’s travel plans. They’d booked the flights to Victoria. Non-refundable.

Shane couldn't disappear even if he wanted to.

There was a pregnant pause and Rozanov looked at him like he’d done something stupid.

“But your friends do not know about us,” Rozanov said, his voice dripping with accusation.

Busted.

“Hollander?”

He surveyed Rozanov's stern face for a hint at how he was feeling. Was Rozanov going to yell at him? Throw something? Break things off?

No, he wouldn't break up with him over something so trivial. Except that maybe to Rozanov, telling his friend about their affair wasn't a trivial decision. It shattered their sacred bond of trust. Shane knew that the safest way to protect both of them was to make sure that no one ever knew. No one could know.

But it was Rose. How could he keep something like this from her?

"Right," Shane said, shrugging his left shoulder to play it cool. "I haven't told anyone."

Stop talking, stupid.

"Shane," Rozanov said, like he was made of see-through material. "You are a bad liar."

Shane scoffed and then sighed. "I know," he agreed. "I'm sorry if that's a problem."

Rozanov nodded and softly planted a kiss on his left temple. "I'm glad you have friends that you can trust."

Shane wondered if there was some hidden cue in what he'd just said. If Rozanov was testing him to see if he could keep their affair a secret.

"It's only one friend," Shane clarified. "She kind of figured it out. You can trust her, I promise."

Rozanov took Shane's face in his massive hands and just stared at him for a moment, analyzing his movements.

"What did you tell them about me," he asked curiously.

Shane blushed and his dark freckles bounced across his cheeks. "Nothing... much."

He knew that his answer would only serve to inflame Rozanov's curiosity.

"No, I want to hear," Rozanov said.

Shane spoke frankly. "I told them that you made me come three times before you even came once."

He chuckled. "I'm glad someone knows."

Shane was momentarily distracted by the faint touch of Rozanov's lips to his shoulder.

"More," Rozanov commanded. He reached a hand around to cup Shane's ass and pull him in closer, so that their penises would have been touching if it weren't for all the pesky fabric in the way.

"I— told them that you were the best I'd ever had," Shane said breathlessly. "That no one could ever satisfy me like you can."

Rozanov hummed in agreement. "What else?" He yanked the back of Shane's collar roughly, bringing Shane's ear to his lips. "Tell me."

He dick wasn't physically capable of getting hard again this soon. But his body was *really* trying.

Shane went off-book for the next one. "I told them— I told them that my hole was made for your dick."

The room went silent. Then Rozanov erupted in laughter. "No you didn't," he called Shane's bluff

"No I didn't," Shane conceded. "But it's the truth."

Shane naturally began swaying in Rozanov's arms like they were slow dancing.

"I should go," Shane said finally.

He was always the first one to leave. It was a protective measure. Shane didn't think his tender heart could handle watching Rozanov walk away from him.

The act of leaving gave him a small semblance of power in an otherwise powerless situation. This way, it felt like it was *his* choice to leave. Even though, if he had his way, he would stay there with Rozanov in that office until they both starved and were forced to leave in order to scavenge for food.

"Where are you going," Rozanov asked. "Hot date you have to get ready for?"

"Yes," Shane lied. He gave his answer in a serious tone. "And I can't be late."

Rozanov's expression shifted from mocking to almost forlorn.

All he said was, "Whoever he is will be a lucky man." Then he winked. "I would know."

Shane felt mildly guilty about allowing Rozanov to maintain the false-impression that he was still seeing other people. But it would be worse to tell him the truth. The truth that Shane was hopelessly consumed with thoughts of him every waking hour of the day.

He had to keep up appearances and pretend to be dating around like a normal freshman. After all, wouldn't it be weird to be exclusive with your married professor?

He grabbed his army-green backpack and swung it over his left shoulder. "Are you gonna call me," Shane asked teasingly, as if they were strangers who met at a bar and not a professor and his student exploring each other's bodies at every possible opportunity.

"Get out of my office, Hollander," he said. "I'll see you Friday?"

Chapter 7: Shane

Chapter Notes

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

He met Rose for coffee at what had recently become their go-to spot. It was convenient for Rose since it was only a few short minutes from her Thursday afternoon scene study class.

The food was inedible but the vibes were good and it was a bit of a hole-in-the-wall that few other students knew about. So they could talk openly about their recent intimate adventures without having to censor themselves.

Shane was in the middle of telling her about how Rozanov had taught him to control his breath while he was giving head. Rose was being uncharacteristically judgmental.

“Please tell me you’re using condoms.”

His face reddened and a look of terror crossed Rose’s face when she realized that she had made the correct assumption.

She shook her head in disbelief.

“You skank,” she scolded.

As an ally, Shane felt compelled to call out that kind of sexist language.

“You know,” he said, his voice dripping with condescension. “It’s not very feminist of you to call people skanks.”

“No, it’s not feminist to call *women* skanks,” she made a distinction. “You’re not a woman. And it’s the truth. You screwed a married guy without protection.”

“You told me to do it!”

“I didn’t think I needed to tell you to wrap it up,” she rebutted, astonished by Shane’s lack of sexual knowledge. “Who knows what kind of newfangled diseases that you could have gotten from that man’s dick. You probably got something from just touching the mattress.”

Shane was pretty sure that the correct term was sexually transmitted *infections*.

“Well I’m going to the clinic today,” Shane said, declaring his intention to be a responsible sexually-active adult.

There was a drop-in sexual wellness clinic on campus during weekdays that did no-cost STI screenings. Shane had decided that it would be a good idea to attend the clinic and get tested just to be on the safe side.

Rose was bizarrely excited by Shane’s medical revelation.

“Can I come,” she pleaded. “I’ve been waiting months to go to the clinic with you.”

Shane’s forehead creased. “Why? Isn’t that weird?”

“Because I hate going alone,” Rose explained. “Lily doesn’t come with me anymore because she and her boyfriend broke up. Pregnancy scare.” She shivered. “Thank god neither of us have to worry about that anymore.”

Sometimes Rose could sound so insensitive, but her heart was always in the right place.

“Can you imagine if we’d had a baby together,” she said, the corners of her eyes crinkling with delight.

The thought horrified Shane, but he kept that to himself. He was sure that Rose would be a good mother if that’s something that she wanted, but for himself, he wasn’t so sure about the whole kid thing. Being a parent didn’t really fit into his plans.

“It would have been so cute,” Rose said, staring off into space. “With my blue eyes and your dark hair.”

That’s not how genetics worked, but Shane didn’t bother to ruin her domestic fantasy.

“Anyway,” she carried on after taking another sip of her vanilla latte. “Sometimes it feels like I’m the only person at this school who even likes sex.”

Shane nodded along with her long-winded story despite having absolutely no clue what she was referencing.

“We can be test buddies,” Shane said, cringing slightly.

His friend smiled. “And they say our generation doesn’t get laid,” Rose said with a clever wink.

Shane rolled his eyes. “When does it open again?”

“In like an hour,” Rose answered. “But we should get there early in case it fills up.”

“I thought we were going to brunch,” Shane pouted. He loved brunch.

“Your health comes first,” Rose said seriously. “Waffles will still be there when we’re done.”

Today was Shane’s cheat day. And waffles were his one treat. He’d been looking forward to it for six whole days. It was the one vice he allowed himself.

.... Besides alcohol, occasionally.

And sex, almost constantly.

Sitting across the café, to his left, was possibly the most beautiful man Shane had ever seen in real life. From this angle, he could only make out the back of his head. But he knew that once he turned around –

Oh shit. Was that... Troy Barrett? It totally was. Shane felt like such an idiot for not recognizing him sooner.

It was an embarrassing mix-up that he would need to unpack later.

Troy was a forward on the school’s hockey team. He had glorious brown hair and striking blue eyes. In Shane’s opinion, he was exceptionally cute. Not as rugged or charming as Rozanov, and he wasn’t really Shane’s type, but he would make a good boyfriend for somebody.

Shane had even noticed Troy checking him out a couple times in the locker room when Shane had nothing but a towel wrapped around his waist, failing miserably at being discreet.

Troy had gotten up to leave. As he retrieved his puffy coat from the back of his chair, he made reluctant eye-contact with Shane from across the room. Troy waved, hesitantly, and then started walking towards them.

“Be nice,” Shane mouthed a warning to Rose.

Rose mumbled under her breath, “Fucking asshole.”

“Hey guys,” Troy said once he'd reached their table, inserting himself into their private conversation.

Rose turned up her nose like she had smelled something rotten in the air. Shane understood why she wasn't Troy's biggest fan. He wasn't necessarily a fan of his either. But he was still his Captain, and he needed to at least attempt to keep the peace.

Shane nodded. “Hi Troy.”

He gestured across the table to Rose. “You've met Rose.”

“Hi Rose,” Troy said, less enthusiastically.

Rose was being rude and standoffish. it was a side of her that Shane rarely got to see. It kind of scared him. He was glad to be on her good side because he would hate to be Rose Landry's enemy.

“Where's your friend,” Rose asked sarcastically. “Did he accidentally roofie himself again?”

The rumours about Dallas Kent's predatory actions were widespread amongst the first-year students, especially the women. But Rose's particular aversion to Dallas had emerged after a night out early into their first semester when she had been forced to single-handedly wrestle him away from a drunk woman who barely looked old enough to drink alcohol. Dallas had been leading the young woman outside by the arm when Rose made a bee-line for the door, throwing her weight in front of it and forcing it shut.

The woman was practically falling over and she looked like she was leaning on Dallas to stay upright. Her eyes kept batting open and shut, she was swaying back and forth and she

couldn't verbally respond to any of the very basic questions that Rose asked.

What's your name? Do you know where you are right now? Where are you? What is the address for this house? How did you get here?

Do you know who this man is? What's his name? Did you want to go home with him? Is he your boyfriend? Did you meet him tonight? Did he give you something?

Are you cold? Are you sick? Are you hurt? Where do you live? Do you need a ride home? Do you need to go to the hospital?

Eventually, Rose had caused enough of a fuss, and there were too many witnesses, that Dallas simply called her a bitch, gave up and went home.

At least, Shane hoped that he had just gone home.

Shane had witnessed the entire ordeal unfold, and the next day he'd gone straight to his coach's office and reported it, but nothing ever happened. Dallas never got in trouble. Shane doubted that his Coach Theriault even brought it up to Dallas or warned him not to do it again.

He told Shane that he would "handle it" and that he didn't need to worry. But Shane couldn't stop himself from dwelling on the fact that there were probably many times that Dallas had done something similar and there wasn't anyone as brave as Rose to intervene. How many women had Dallas hurt? How could anyone stand to be around someone so vile?

Shane could never wrap his mind around how a seemingly nice, normal person like Troy was friends with someone as despicable as Dallas Kent.

Troy wasn't a bad guy, Shane thought. He was just a follower. A bystander.

Regardless, he was complicit.

Troy and Shane both ignored what Rose had just said.

”Are you feeling ready for the game tomorrow,” Shane asked instead.

”Huh?” Troy seemed out of it. “Oh, yeah. Yeah for sure.”

“Are you feeling okay,” Shane asked. Troy was looking a little green.

“I have to go,” Troy said suddenly. “See you tomorrow.”

He turned on his heels and started jogging towards the exit. He couldn’t appear get away from them fast enough.

Rose and Shane exchanged a knowing glance.

“Well that was fucking weird.”

It would take a couple of weeks to get the results of his STI-screening. But the doctor told him that he wouldn’t actually receive the formal results unless something bad showed up on the tests. Otherwise, if two weeks passed and he hadn’t gotten an email or a phone call, he could assume that everything was normal. It seemed like a flawed system, but he had no choice but to accept it.

They got in and out - pun intended - of the clinic within half an hour of their arrival. There were a lot of empty seats in the waiting area and it didn’t seem like too many people showed

up to access the services.

Either everyone on campus was celibate or they just weren't bothering to get tested.

Shane had, perhaps erroneously, assumed that everyone around him was having sex all the time. His classmates, his friends, the barista at Starbucks, everyone. Everyone except him. Maybe Rose was right. Maybe he had vastly overestimated how active his peers' sex lives were.

The clinic staff were all very friendly and Shane didn't mind answering their invasive questions about his private life. He even disclosed that he was gay and having anal sex. The doctor took some extra time to talk to him about the importance of taking PrEP to reduce the risk of HIV infection.

It was a sobering experience. It also made him realize that he had no idea how many people Rozanov was sleeping with. He had sort of implied that there was no one else. Aside from his wife, of course. But how could Shane be sure? Maybe he had simply heard what he wanted to hear in that moment.

After their respective appointments, him and Rose ventured off campus to acquire the waffles that Shane had been promised. They got takeout and spent two hours in Shane's dorm just hanging out by themselves, listening to music, and helping Rose learn her lines at the last-minute before she had to head out to class. Shane's line delivery was always emotionless, but Rose said he was getting better.

"Rose," Shane asked out of the blue. "Am I a horrible person?"

She looked confused. "Where is this coming from?"

You didn't say no.

“I can’t stop thinking about what you said,” Shane admitted. “About how I’m sleeping with someone else’s husband.”

Rozanov belonged to someone else. Shane had no claim to him. His body, maybe, but not his heart.

“That’s his problem, not yours,” she said, giving him more credit than Shane thought he deserved. “You’re single. You can sleep with whoever you want.”

“But it still makes me a bad person,” Shane said solemnly.

“You couldn’t be bad if you tried.”

Shane’s mouth twitched.

It was almost 4:30 in the afternoon and Rose would need to be on her way soon if she wanted to be on time for class.

“I wish I could stay and help you through this,” Rose said tenderly. “But I have to get to class.”

She gave Shane’s cheek a parting kiss.

“I love you,” she said. “Try not to be sad. And give yourself the night off, okay? I can swing by again when I’m done. Around seven?”

“Sounds good,” Shane said. He really didn’t want to be alone with his thoughts tonight. “Have a good class. Love you.”

Chapter End Notes

welcome to (unnamed university) troy barrett!

i promise there will be more sex in the next chapter

like and subscribe for more

Chapter 8: Shane

Chapter Notes

back with more smut!

thank you to those who've left nice comments, it really motivates me to write more

like and subscribe for more

(i'll likely be posting another chapter later tonight...)

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

They weren't making love, they were fucking.

Rozanov was behind him, holding his hip steady with one hand and pulling his hair with the other, steering him further towards the edge with each thrust. Shane had already come once and was seconds away from another. The hot coil of pressure in his stomach was inching closer to a breaking point. His already low self-restraint was hanging on by the thinnest possible thread.

They had gotten into a solid rhythm, and the head of Rozanov's cock was hitting against his prostate with heart-stopping precision.

Then, almost like Rozanov could sense that Shane was close, he stopped thrusting suddenly.

Shane was incredulous. "Why'd you stop?"

Rozanov's eyes twinkled. "Patience," he said. "I always give you what you want, don't I?"

"Eventually," Shane murmured.

"Yes, eventually." Rozanov repeated. "Maybe tonight is the night I will fuck you until you cry. Hmmm? Would you like that?"

Shane couldn't tell if he was kidding. "Do you want to keep talking, or do you want to make me come?"

Rozanov growled. He slapped Shane's ass violently, swiftly pulled out, and told him to roll over. Shane didn't argue. He did what he was told. Rozanov was in control, and it was better that way.

It kept him out of his own head, which was a dangerous place to be these days.

Once he had Shane on his back, Rozanov concentrated on his neck, kissing and sucking a neglected pressure point beneath his jaw. He paid special attention to the sensitive spot behind Shane's ear. It tickled in an unpleasant way and Shane squirmed.

After about thirty seconds of only kissing, Shane was feeling extremely frustrated.

"Fuck Hollander," Rozanov said, drawing out the R-sound in Shane's last name.

"Enough of that," Shane complained. "Come on, let's go."

Rozanov's lips curved upwards. "Why so anxious? Do you have somewhere to be later? Another date to get to?"

The envy in Rozanov's voice was a potent aphrodisiac.

"Maybe," Shane said, leaving his plans for the evening ambiguous.

“It’s not good manners to go on a date with another man’s come still inside you.”

Shane offered a solution. “Then maybe you shouldn’t come inside me.”

Rozanov dramatically tapped his finger on his chin like he was considering Shane’s proposal.

“No,” he decided. “I cannot deprive you of that when I know how much you love it.”

“Gee thanks,” Shane said sarcastically.

“You’re so romantic, Hollander.”

“You’re so annoying.”

“That is not what you were saying five minutes ago.”

Shane had to use all of his remaining energy to think of a response.

“Your mouth was actually being useful five minutes ago.”

“Mm,” Rozanov hummed. “So there are parts of me that you like,”

“Sure.”

“Like which parts? Be specific.”

Shane felt some real animosity begin to creep in to their banter. "You're really going to make me say it?"

Rozanov started playing with the outside of Shane's hole, not quite seeming ready to put his dick back inside. Maybe it was because he knew that once he did, it would be over soon, and he was trying to prolong it as long as possible.

"What's gotten into you," Rozanov said. His question took Shane out of the moment slightly.

Besides you?

"You're so bossy tonight. But you are not the boss, remember?"

Shane was impatient. "You're taking too long."

That finally got Rozanov to start moving again. He positioned himself at Shane's entrance and held onto the back of his head for support.

"I'm sorry," he said as he thrust back inside. Shane's body relaxed at the fullness of Rozanov's cock. "Is that better?"

Much better, Shane thought. But out loud he just said, "Harder."

Rozanov's eyebrows raised. "Oh yeah? You want it harder," he asked like it was a threat.

His fingers dug into Shane's hips and he pressed him deeper into the mattress as he drove into him ruthlessly, thrust after thrust, with no reprieve.

“How’s that,” he asked.

It still wasn’t enough. Shane knew that the more he antagonized him, the more effort Rozanov would put into fucking him properly.

“Mm, it’s okay,” Shane said, biting the inside of his mouth to keep from moaning.

“Oh,” Rozanov asked. “Just okay?”

Shane smiled involuntarily at his own stubbornness.

“Could be better. There’s still room for - *mmm* - improvement.”

Rozanov looked at Shane like he was going to eat him for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Devour him whole and leave his carcass under the floorboards.

He gently kissed the flushed skin in the middle of Shane’s chest. It was achingly slow and sensual, and Shane hated how much he liked it. He grabbed a handful of Rozanov’s hair and pulled it as hard as he could, jerking his head back, desperately hoping it would finally make him give him what he really wanted.

Rozanov laughed in between grunts. “You’re such a brat.”

“I just know you have more in you.”

He took Shane’s right leg in his arm, holding it up as he thrust into him deeper. Shane could feel the head of his dick knocking against his prostate again. *Fucking finally.*

Shane should have thought more carefully about what he was asking for because the sensation was quickly becoming almost *too* much.

Shane whimpered. "I knew you were holding out on me."

Shane grabbed onto his shoulders as his mouth fell open.

"Oh my god," Shane muttered under his breath loud enough for Rozanov to hear. He needed encouragement too.

Shane could feel his orgasm building quickly with each thrust. He couldn't always come just from this, but sometimes, when he was really turned on, like tonight, it just worked.

"You're gonna make me come," Shane told him. What he meant was, *Keep going. Don't change what you're doing.*

"Wait for me."

Shane gritted his teeth. "I don't know if I can."

"Just hold it," Rozanov told him, like it was easy. "I know you can do this for me."

Silently, Shane agreed to wait for him. Shane took a deep breath in through his nose, and exhaled the air slowly.

Rozanov looked proud of him.

He starting touching his dick in anticipation of his release. Giving himself a few careful, deliberate, strokes.

For a split-second, he thought Rozanov was going to tell him to stop.

“I love watching you do that.”

Rozanov was getting distracted. “Are you almost there,” Shane asked, the desperation clear in his tone.

His eyes light up. “You’re so impatient,” he said, going at a maddeningly slow pace. “Just enjoy it.”

Shane's hand retreated. “If you stop again, I’ll murder you.” He was only partially joking.

Rozanov’s eyes darted between Shane’s face and his dick, which was currently flailing between their two bodies. “Is that another fantasy of yours,” Rozanov asked. He was obsessed with the idea that Shane had secret fantasies that he was keeping hidden from him.

He sped up, and Shane gripped his arms for support. He could feel himself about to come again. His muscles start to contract and tighten around him, and he didn’t think he was physically capable of stopping what was about to happen.

“Jesus Hollander,” Rozanov said, expressing awe.

“Can you feel that?”

“Yeah,” Rozanov confirmed. "Fuck."

They both laughed, except their laughter was interrupted by loud moaning and heavy breathing and the sound of Rozanov’s pelvis slamming against him. Skin against skin. The sound was wet and obscene.

Rozanov's mouth slacked open and he started grunting and cursing. Some of it was in Russian. It sounded like he was in pain or in the middle of running a marathon.

Or like he was about to bust inside of Shane in the next five seconds.

Shane's hypothesis was proven correct when just moments later, Rozanov finally asked, "You ready?"

Shane responded eagerly. "Yes. Hurry up."

Rozanov quietly mumbled something than Shane couldn't hear. It didn't sound like English. Then he came hard inside him, setting off fireworks inside of Shane's body that made him erupt almost concurrently.

Shane collapsed onto the mattress while Rozanov was busy catching his breath.

No matter how many positions they'd tried, Shane was convinced that missionary was the most optimal. It had everything. Kissing, eye contact, and the angle was by far the most promising.

He had brought this controversial opinion to Rose one day, and she surprisingly agreed. Missionary was the unequivocal winner.

In the past, Shane had always wanted to avoid any positions where he had to look at someone's face during the act, because it would remind him that he was with a woman and make it more difficult to concentrate on getting it over with. Now, whenever Rozanov took him from behind, Shane would strain his neck trying to turn around and see his face.

Rozanov furrowed his brow. He seemed pensive, which was unusual given how relaxed he usually was afterwards.

“What’s he like,” Rozanov asked. His tone was casual, almost flippant.

“Who?”

“Your boyfriend.”

Shane didn’t have a boyfriend. He had a *fake boyfriend*. Joseph. Who he had definitely been meaning to break up with.

“Is he good in bed,” Rozanov asked.

Shane wondered if what Rozanov meant was if his sex life with imaginary Joseph was anything like what they had. If it could even compare. But Rozanov wasn't entitled to that kind of information.

He stalled. "You're really asking me that right now?"

"Why not," Rozanov asked. "Is he bad? Because I may be able to give him some tips on how to satisfy you."

“I wouldn’t know. We haven’t... uh... really done anything yet.” Shane was testing the waters to see if maybe Rozanov would tell him that he wasn't seeing anyone else either.

Rozanov’s lips curved into a satisfied smirk, and Shane knew that whatever he had to say next would be embarrassing.

“You are saving it all for me.”

“No,” Shane begged to differ. “We’re just taking things slow.”

“I didn’t know you were capable of that,” Rozanov said, teasing at the irony that Shane had recently come twice in a matter of minutes.

“Well, I don’t usually put out on a first date,” Shane joked.

“So I am special,” Rozanov asked. Shane had walked into that one.

“You and I are not dating,” Shane stated a fact. “Anyway, can we stop talking about me?”

“Why?” Rozanov shrugged. “There is no reason to be embarrassed in front of me. Not after what we just did.”

"I just don't want to talk about those kind of things," Shane said. "They're personal."

"Whatever you say."

Shane stared at the ceiling fan until he worked up the courage to speak again.

“I should go,” Shane said after a while.

They had developed a consistent routine by now. It was like clockwork. They fucked, cleaned up, cuddled for seven to ten minutes, and then Shane made up some obligatory excuse about why he had to leave before Rozanov could kick him out.

He cycled through the same three excuses every time: Early practice, plans with friends, or he had to study.

Rozanov nodded. "I should get home too. My wife is probably worried. I told her I would be home hours ago."

He had never talked about his wife in Shane's presence before. The mention of her made Shane lose his ability to form proper words for a few seconds.

"Then we probably should call it a night," Shane said. He secretly wished that Rozanov would beg him to stay just once. Leave his wife at home, alone, and stay here in bed with him.

But that would never happen.

"Fine by me," Rozanov said, already reaching over the side of the bed to retrieve his pants. But instead of putting them on, he rummaged through the pockets and pulled out a pack of cigarettes.

Shane grimaced in disapproval. "Is this what you do every time I leave?"

As an answer, Rozanov ignited the tip and blew out a puff of smoke in front of Shane's face. Shane swatted the smoke away.

"Why do you do that?"

"Do you want to try," Rozanov asked, perhaps sensing some intrigue in Shane's tone.

"I'm an athlete," Shane said. "And besides, that stuff is bad for you. Ever heard that smoking kills?"

Rozanov's eyes rolled back in his skull so far that Shane thought his face might get stuck that way.

"Should I do what you kids do and smoke strawberries out of a vape pen?"

"No, you shouldn't do it at all."

"One puff won't kill you," Rozanov said, holding out the cigarette as an offering. *Had he never heard of the concept of secondhand smoke?*

Rozanov pouted when Shane refused.

Shane was usually able to resist peer pressure. But Rozanov wasn't his peer.

"Fine," Shane agreed.

His expression turned into a lopsided smile as he inhaled and then shotgunned the smoke into Shane's open mouth. Their lips briefly touched. It was strangely, unexpectedly intimate.

Shane held back a cough.

Then Rozanov, sensing that Shane hadn't gotten the full experience, held the cigarette to Shane's lips.

"Suck, then blow," he said with a rude smile.

Shane took the cigarette from Rozanov's fingers and held it to his own lips. "I'm not stupid, I know how to do it."

He inhaled for longer than he should have, and came away slightly nauseous with a mildly sore throat.

“Well, that was fun,” Shane said sarcastically. "Same time next week?"

Smoke exited Rozanov's nostrils as he shook his head. "Maybe you will see me in the stands tomorrow," he teased.

Shane punctuated his left eyebrow.

“You want to come to one of my games,” he asked, eyeing him suspiciously. “Since when do you like hockey?”

“Since always,” Rozanov said defensively, crossing his free arm over his chest.

“Oh yeah,” Shane challenged. “Then why did you never bring it up before now?”

“I don’t like talking about personal things with my students,” he said matter-of-factly.

“Liking hockey is a personal thing?” Shane was being sarcastic. “You can eat me out in your office but your professional boundaries make you draw the line at talking about sports you enjoy?”

Ilya smirked. He always seemed so pleased when he was able to make Shane feel flustered.

“Exactly.”

“You’re an asshole.”

“It is a gateway to worse things,” Rozanov justified.

“Like what, telling me your favourite tv show,” Shane joked.

Rozanov laughed mockingly at Shane’s attempt at humour.

“No, that is too far, they might fire me over that,” Rozanov said in jest.

He wasn’t being serious, but there was a glimmer of truth to it.

That comment made Shane's stomach turn over in dread. Technically, their relationship - if it could even be called that - was against the university’s policies on student-professor fraternization. Rozanov could be fired or worse, blacklisted from every university in the country. Shane didn't think about this reality often. Despite his awareness of needing to keep their hookups a secret, he didn't want to consider how Rozanov was quite literally risking his livelihood by fucking Shane.

The thought of Roznov risking everything for the chance just to taste him made Shane's dick instinctively twitch against his stomach.

“Fine, you can come,” Shane reluctantly agreed. “But you can’t try to distract me.”

Rozanov's ears perked up at the challenge. “And how exactly would I distract you, Mr. Hockey player?”

“By doing shit like that,” Shane said plainly. “By being you.”

“What does this mean,” Rozanov asked, basking in the attention.

Shane didn’t tease him or keep him in suspense. He let Ilya know exactly how he felt.

“By being sexy and charming and making me want to climb on top of you every time I see you,” Shane answered honestly.

“I had no idea how difficult it was for you to concentrate,” Rozanov feigned surprise. “It’s a miracle you are passing my class.”

“Not really a miracle,” Shane objected to his use of the word. “I’m sleeping with the professor.”

Rozanov let out a low chuckle.

“But that’s supposed to be a secret,” Shane said.

Rozanov slipped his arm around Shane’s back, pulling him in closer. “Too late.” He nibbled at Shane’s pink earlobe. “Don’t worry, I will tell no one. Lips are sealed.”

Chapter End Notes

i love jealous ilya

Chapter 9: Ilya

Chapter Notes

ilya pov!!!

sorry shane we needed a break from you

this was very fun to write so maybe i'll do more of his perspective in the future. we go deeper into ilya's backstory in this chapter. trigger warning for SA.

thank you for 200 kudos

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

He didn't consider himself a very traditional man, but from the outside, Ilya's life had followed a fairly ordinary course. He settled down in his early twenties, married his childhood sweetheart, obtained his PhD at thirty and hoped to achieve tenure by forty.

On the inside, he was constantly battling his worst impulses. Trying desperately to keep the manicured life he had created for himself intact, even though every cell in his body ached to be free. To tear it down and rebuild into something else. Something better and more authentic.

This existential struggle caused Ilya to act out in unhealthy ways.

Of course, Ilya understood on some level that his attraction to corrupting innocent young students was inappropriate, even unethical. He told himself that none of his students were ever permanently harmed by their relationship. It was the opposite, in fact. A little heartbreak was sometimes a good thing. It made one stronger, more resilient. Wounds heal and leave scars, and scars make you more interesting. Experiences are like currency. They give you something to talk about with your friends over drinks at happy hour. They give you fond memories to look back on when you're old and grey and your libido is dead.

And the students Ilya slept with were always the type of people who needed a bit of a push to get out of their shell. They needed some extra attention, and he was willing to provide it. Ilya was doing them a service, really. He was helping them along.

That's how he justified it in his own mind, at least. He rationalized that it was reciprocal, since both parties received a mutual benefit from the arrangement. Ilya got to feel youthful and in control, and the student could learn from him, enhance their sexual prowess, and then take the knowledge and experience they gained and apply it to an actual, real relationship.

Ilya wasn't a predator.

In Ilya's mind, predators were only labelled "predatory" because they were ugly or unattractive. It wasn't their behavior that was being scrutinized, it was their appearance. They were punished for having the audacity to believe that they could act as recklessly in pursuing their desires as a beautiful person could.

He was handsome, well-groomed, well-dressed, and he went to great lengths to maintain his physique. He put in this Herculean effort partially because he was extremely vain, but also because he knew that as soon as he lost his looks, he also lost the benefit of the doubt. It was one thing to hook up with your hot older professor, it was another to be preyed on by some creepy old man who couldn't keep his dick in his pants. He needed to fit firmly in the former category. That's how he kept getting away with it. He needed to be everyone's favourite professor. He needed all of his students to want him, and to envy those who actually got to fuck him.

He was barely fourteen years old when his older brother's girlfriend stole his virginity. It started out innocently enough. He would see her occasionally when she dropped off Alexei and they would exchange pleasantries. She would buy him little treats and video games. Then she started coming over to the house when Alexei wasn't around and teaching him how to play. Ilya had been lonely since his mother died, and his own family, including his brother, barely paid him any attention. They were too busy with their own problems to bother being burdened with his complicated adolescent feelings. After the funeral, they never even took him to visit her grave.

After his father re-married, they were never allowed to talk about Ilya or Alexei's mother around his father's new wife. It felt like they had replaced his mother with a younger model. They were all expected to pretend like she never existed.

Having someone older than him, even if it was only by four years, who wanted to take care of him, gave Ilya his first taste of security since his mother. Natalia made sure that he was fed and that he got to school on time. She never let him starve or go to bed on an empty stomach. She was, for all intents and purposes, a surrogate parent. His only real shred of a support system.

One Saturday while Alexei was working, Ilya and Natalia were on the couch watching an old black-and-white movie, and Natalia threw her blanket over both of their legs and slid in closer to snuggle. It was nice to feel someone touch him again. He didn't realize how long he'd gone without affection.

She laid her head on his chest and let him breathe in the scent of her lotion mixed with vanilla body spray. To this day, he could still vividly recall that smell. She dropped her head and placed wet sloppy kisses on his neck. *Keep watching*, she whispered. Her hands drifted lower, and she played with him lazily as the credits began to roll.

The music played on as she draped her left leg over top of him, trapping him in place while she gave him a handjob under the blanket. He froze, and then gave in.

He could have fought her off, even as a fourteen-year-old. He was strong for his age, and always getting into fights on the schoolyard. She didn't physically overpower him. She didn't force him to do anything that he didn't want to do.

They quickly graduated to having actual sex on a semi-regular basis. It was always on her terms. Ilya did not get to decide when or where it happened. He had to be on alert and wait for her signals.

He was devastated when she left for college and never called him again.

She was a beautiful older woman. What fourteen-year-old boy wouldn't have wanted that? What fourteen-year-old boy would be anything less than completely ecstatic that an 18-year-old with long blond hair and perfect tits would take pity on him and claim his virginity?

Ilya sometimes wondered if he would be a different person if he had been older when he'd started having sex. Would he be more well-adjusted if his first time had been when he was emotionally mature enough to handle the consequences of being intimate with another person? If it had been with someone who treasured him instead of someone who used him.

But it didn't do him any good to dwell on the past. This is simply how things unfolded.

The first time he gave into temptation and slept with a student was back when he was a twenty-five-year-old teaching assistant. Her name was - still is - Becca. He didn't plan it. It just sort of happened, as these things often do. She needed help on an assignment, the particulars of which he could no longer recall, and the professor had offloaded most of his responsibilities for the course onto Ilya. He met with her a couple of times and tried to keep things strictly professional. But he kept fixating on certain behaviours of hers that he found intriguing. The way she always crossed her right leg over her left when she sat down, the way she tilted her head towards him and puffed out her chest, the way her eyes sparkled when she finally got the correct answer. He found her earnestness downright adorable.

They started seeing each other often, meeting up for sex even though he was married by that time. They would fuck in his office or drive to some abandoned parking lot and go at it in the backseat of his car until it reeked of sex.

He couldn't remember exactly how the affair began. It wasn't important, but he assumed that she must have initiated it somehow. All he remembered was that she had ostensibly come by his office to return a book, and they ended their conversation pressed-up against his desk.

He remembered the tears welling in her eyes when he broke things off at the end of the exam season. He hadn't meant for her to get so attached. That was his fault for not realizing sooner. But she seemed to be taking it in stride. She changed her major from History to Politics, which Ilya was grateful for, since it meant that he no longer ran into her in class. She applied to grad school in a different province and got accepted. And that was the end. Or so he thought.

He ran into Becca at a conference a few years back and she smiled at him from across the room and gave a polite wave. At the end of the night, she brought him back to her hotel room and screwed his brains out for old times sake. It didn't do anything for him. She was far more confident and sexually proficient by the time they'd run into each other again, and that just wasn't what he was looking for in a sexual partner.

A few days later, he'd received an ominous email notification from Becca. She had reached out to him using the same old address that they used to covertly communicate when they were both still students. The email was long and rambling. It seemed like something she had written through tears or as part of some therapeutic exercise. There was no way she proof-read any of it.

Once he scrolled past the unnecessary exposition about her childhood trauma and her strained relationship with her biological father, he finally got to the part about him. Becca confessed that she had hoped that being with him again would have taken away some of the feelings of powerlessness that she felt looking back on their relationship. That she wanted to prove to herself that she was no longer some naive freshman girl that he could lure into bed. That she had power now too. That she didn't belong to him anymore and that he shouldn't have taken advantage of her like he did.

Ilya deleted the correspondence immediately without responding. He chalked it up to a fluke. An overly emotional, bordering on unstable, woman who couldn't take accountability for her own role in what happened between them. Before seeing her at the conference, he hadn't thought about her in years.

Surely, she was the only student of his who felt that way.

But Rozanov knew that he had to take responsibility and own the part he played in that situation. He had been careless in choosing to sleep with Becca. She wasn't strong enough to handle it. He didn't pay close enough attention. Probably because she was the first one. He didn't know what to look for yet. He hadn't studied her patterns. He should have realized that she was emotionally volatile.

He didn't consider his relationship with Becca to have a power-imbalance at the time, since he was a student at the university too. A masters student, but still. And they were only a few years apart in age. But as time went on, the age gap between himself and his lovers naturally widened.

That email was a wake-up call that he desperately needed. He couldn't afford to be making stupid mistakes that could ruin his life. His past was going to try its best to catch up to him, and it was his mission to outrun it.

As he got older, Ilya found that it was rare that he knew of a professor at the university who had never gotten intimately involved with a student at some point in their career. It was just too tempting. And academic types were supposed to be anti-establishment, right? What was marriage, anyway, if not an archaic, patriarchal construct. What was monogamy if not a system invented to stifle our natural sexual impulses so that we could focus on working ourselves to death. His job was to expand young minds, not restrict them.

In all of his relationships with students, he always had one rule: Ilya would never make the first move. That was one line that he never crossed. He always let his students come to him. They had to seek him out. He didn't want there to be any confusion over who crossed the boundary first.

And who was he to turn down their advances? They were fully grown adults, capable of making their own choices. It would be patronizing to suggest otherwise.

He had sex with non-students too, of course. But it wasn't as thrilling. He liked the feeling of picking out one special student each semester to take to bed. To give them all of his attention and focus. To give them a crash course in human sexuality in the same way that he'd been taught all those years ago.

He would often teach his classes as if that one noteworthy pupil were the only person in the room, and give his lecture entirely to them. He enjoyed watching the expression on their faces as it slowly began to dawn on them that he was looking directly at them the entire time. His excitement rose exponentially when he would stare long enough that the student would blush and look away, scared that they had done something wrong.

He rarely had sex with graduate students. They were too experienced and he found them pessimistic and jaded. As further disincentive, it was simply too tiring having to pretend to find them or their area of study interesting. Ilya also recognized that he didn't enjoy sex unless there was an element of danger. He didn't want society's approval. If getting caught wouldn't cost him something important, then he would get bored.

One upside to being attracted to all sexes was that Ilya's options were never limited. He had considered a few other potential contenders for his winter-semester dalliance, including

Giselle, an international student from France. She was soft spoken and dripping with untapped sexual potential.

Ilya had presumed that her lack of participation in the classroom setting was due to her shyness and the significant language barrier. But after meeting with her one-on-one, he realized that she was actually just incredibly fucking dull.

Regardless, it wouldn't have mattered anyway because Shane was by far the best candidate in his freshman class.

Ilya loved Shane's honesty more than anything physical about him. And he loved the physical parts too. But it was the way that he refused to play games. How he was incapable of keeping his feelings hidden. These were the aspects of Shane Hollander that plagued his mind during all hours of the day and night. All the things that Shane might have wished that he could change about himself were the things that Ilya found the most endearing.

Some people say that it's impossible to tell how many lovers a person has had just by looking at them, but that's a lie. There were certain tells that Ilya had picked up on over the years. And he was very intuitive. It didn't take a rocket scientist or a psychic to know that Shane had never allowed himself the experience of being with a man.

Ilya wanted to change that.

Granted, he thought that it would be more of a challenge to get him into bed. But he was pleasantly surprised that the sexual element of their relationship transpired rather quickly. But again, it was all on Shane's terms. He stayed late to talk after class. He followed Ilya to his office. And he came back for more. Just like the rest of them.

In many ways, Shane was a composite of the type of student that Ilya typically liked to fuck. He sat near the back of the class, didn't draw any attention to himself, blushed whenever Ilya glanced his way, and laughed at his obviously corny jokes. Ilya appreciated that Shane was intelligent but not in an obvious way. He wasn't obnoxious or loud.

It wasn't that he lacked confidence. One of the very first things Ilya had noticed about Shane was how well he carried himself. But he was missing one essential component: Experience. And Ilya knew that he could help with that.

But his connection with Shane also differed from the other student-teacher relationships that Ilya had entered into, in several key ways. For one, Ilya often found himself questioning what Shane was doing when they weren't together. He observed himself asking questions about Shane's personal life that normally would not interest him. Sometimes Shane would be unusually gifted at a particular sexual act, and Ilya would wonder if he had learned about it from someone else. When he allowed himself to consider that maybe Shane had taken other lovers since he'd begun mentoring him, he wanted to learn their names so that he could track them down and break their legs with a sledgehammer. (Or maybe something less dramatic.)

Ilya did not believe in jealousy. Jealousy was a form of ownership, and Ilya fundamentally disagreed with the notion of claiming ownership over another person. He did not plan on being faithful to anyone but himself, so he shouldn't expect faithfulness from anyone else.

And yet, Ilya could not deny the fiery pit of need that burned inside him every time Shane left his apartment to go meet another man.

He was jealous.

Chapter End Notes

i should probably stop writing now and go to bed

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Chapter 10: Shane

Chapter Notes

hi it's me again ❤️

we're back to our regularly scheduled Shane pov

no smut in this one but i will make up for it in the next chapter

*trigger warning for homophobic language

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

They were officially one month away from the playoffs. McGill hadn't won the men's national championship since 2012 and Shane was determined to be the team to finally break their fourteen-year losing streak.

All things considered, this probably was not the game to invite Rozanov to observe. Except that Rozanov had already invited himself and therefore Shane had no choice.

He was already extremely anxious about winning, and now he felt like he was watching himself with double-vision - his own and Rozanov's. He imagined each of his plays through Rozanov's eyes, attempting to gauge whether if he was impressed or disappointed. Questioning whether he was living up to his expectations.

The first two periods were relatively uneventful. Neither team had scored a single goal. Shane had two opportunities to shoot on the opposing team's goalie, and missed both times.

Every time he looked out into the stands and saw Rozanov staring back at him, his brain felt like it was going to explode out of his skull and leave chunks all over the ice.

Rozanov was sitting with the head of graduate studies, Professor Marleau, a tall middle-aged man with black hair. Occasionally the two younger women in the seats in front of them would crane their heads back to converse with the men. From Shane's vantage point, it

looked almost like it was headed in the direction of a double date, but he didn't let that thought percolate for too long.

The slight chance that Rozanov may be using his hockey game as an opportunity to pick up women made Shane want to shoot the puck directly at his dumb perfect face.

It was his two worlds colliding: Hockey and Ilya Rozanov. The former was the only thing that had truly mattered to him in his life since he first laced up a pair of skates when he was three years old. The latter was a man that he wasn't sure even cared for him very much as a person. He might of just enjoyed the way he felt when his dick was inside of his mouth or his ass.

Rozanov's presence at this game represented something huge. His sexuality and his sport were dual aspects of Shane's life that he had always been forced to keep separate out of necessity and survival. Now, the man he was sleeping with was watching him from the stands as he played the sport he loved. Rozanov wouldn't understand how much that meant to Shane, and Shane would never tell him, but it was a big deal.

Shane did not want to have to live two separate lives forever. Eventually, years down the line when he was established in his career, he wanted all parts of himself to be able to exist in the same universe. He wanted to get married and live happily ever after just like everyone else was allowed to.

It was one of the many reasons that he envied Rose. She was taking classes with artists and visionaries. Creative people who didn't waste their time worrying about standing out, because that was the whole point. Meanwhile, Shane was stuck playing on a team with creeps like Dallas Kent.

Jackie and Rose were cheering so loud that Shane could recognize their unique voices pouring in from the stands. They were both wearing red and white McGill branded sweatshirts and Jackie had a colourful home-made banner with Hayden's number drawn on the front in glitter-lettering.

Rose was so animated that she kept spilling her beer on her pant leg.

“Let’s go,” Rose stood up and chanted. “Whooooo!”

Shane was skating towards the other team’s goal line and Hayden was just a hair ahead of him on the opposite side, balancing the puck on the edge of his stick. Dallas was a few feet to Hayden’s left and had a clear shot to the net. Shane was a bit further back, and one of the other team’s defencemen was standing between him and victory.

Dallas was the cleaner pass. Less risky. But Shane knew that Hayden would never pass to Dallas when he had another option.

Hayden faked like he was going to pass to Dallas and then proceeded to pass the puck in Shane’s direction. The puck ricocheted off the blade of an opposing player’s skate, and Shane heroically caught it on his stick and took the shot on goal.

It went under the goalie’s pads and into the net. The horn went off and the crowd erupted in celebration. Hayden blew a kiss to Jackie and she caught it and held her palm to her heart, swooning.

Hayden cheered. “Fuck yes! That’s how it’s done. Take notes Kent.”

Dallas skated up behind them and spit on the ice in front of Shane’s left skate.

“You could’ve passed to me.”

Hayden should have taken the high road at that moment.

“We could have,” he said. “If you weren’t such a piss-poor shot.”

Dallas’s eyes went dark.

It was a petty chirp, meant to provoke, but that does not mean that came next was in any sense justified.

“Fucking fags.”

For a moment, Shane thought that he had died. His legs went numb. His ears rang at a high frequency that only he could hear. He could taste the bile scraping up the back of his throat.

Dallas used disgusting homophobic language frequently in the locker room and on the ice, and it always made Shane cringe. Most of the time, it wasn't directed at anyone in particular. But when it was actually said *to* him, *about* him, he knew that there was a deeper meaning behind it.

It meant that Shane didn't belong here. He didn't deserve to be Captain. He didn't even have the right to play hockey at all.

It felt like he was being outed. Even though he didn't say it loud enough for anyone else to have heard him, and most of the team already knew that he was gay, it was still a brutal reminder that no matter how hard he tried to fit in, overgrown toddlers like Dallas Kent would never accept him.

What made it worse was that he was right. Dallas was right about him.

Being a gay man was an intrinsic and immutable trait. No different from his sleek black hair, his height or his brown eyes. It wasn't something that he could change, nor would he want to change it. He liked fucking men. More specifically, being fucked by men. He wasn't ashamed of it. It was a fact as plain as the sky being blue. He just wished that the rest of the world would catch up.

Hayden's jaw unhinged from the rest of his skull.

“You piece of shit,” Hayden yelled.

Immediately Hayden threw a punch, which Dallas successfully dodged. Shane wasn't sure if Hayden was defending his own honour or Shane's. He figured that it was probably a mix of both.

"Fuck off," Dallas spat.

Anger burned in Shane's belly like a furnace. Before he even realized what was happening, Shane's fingers involuntarily curled into the shape of a fist. He held his fists at his side, powerless to defend himself.

"What are you looking at fag?"

The word was a trigger. What gave Dallas the right to call him that? To call *anyone* that? Shane was his Captain. He was supposed to be a leader. How could he lead when anyone could shout vicious slurs at him on the ice in the middle of a game?

He needed to send a message that that sort of language was not going to be tolerated. And there was only one thing that Dallas seemed to understand –

Violence.

Against his better judgment, Shane threw the second punch. Dallas wasn't expecting it. Shane wasn't even really expecting it. He rarely fought with his fists, most of the time he simply used his words. But words weren't going to be enough tonight.

His punch landed on Dallas's left cheek. Hard. Shane heard a *pop* and prayed that he didn't unintentionally remove any of Dallas's teeth from their sockets.

Then Dallas dramatically, unnecessarily, hit the ice like a fucking baby.

What have I done?

He looked down at his right hand, which was already beginning to swell and turn a shade of violet. *Why did I just do that?*

Shane skated backwards away from the scene like a coward.

Thankfully Troy wasn't on the ice. Without his henchman, no one came to Dallas's defence. He just lay there on the ice like an injured animal, nursing the spot where Shane had hit him.

The ref finally intervened after the fighting was long over. But Dallas didn't need his help getting up off the ice. He rose to his feet promptly and pointed his gloved finger directly at Shane. Shane was certain that Dallas was about to charge at him head first. But instead, Dallas flared his nostrils and bore his teeth like a hyena. Blood pooled at the corners of his mouth and spilled over onto the clear ice. He was escorted off the ice to go see the medic and Shane was sent to the penalty box.

"Is he going to be okay," Shane whispered to Hayden before skating to the box.

Hayden shrugged. "I hope not. Asshole deserved it."

They managed to hold onto their one goal lead at the end of the third period.

Shane's goal was the only reason they'd won.

Theriault yelled at him as he was getting off the ice to go wait for him in his office. Now, Shane felt like he was in trouble and sitting across from the school principal waiting to receive his detention slip.

“Since it was a consensual fight, you won’t receive a suspension for any future games,” Theriault informed him. “Think of this as a warning. Your one and only warning.”

He suspected that if he had been a less stellar player, he would’ve received a much worse consequence for his actions.

Shane sat there waiting for something else to happen.

“Can I go now?”

He certainly was not about to apologize. There was nothing to feel sorry for. No one was seriously injured. Dallas only required a couple of stitches above his lip, and the team doctor had already cleared him for practice. If anyone should be apologizing, it was the person whose ignorant words started the fight in the first place.

Theriault went on, “No, you are going to sit there and listen. You aren’t suspended, but I still have to handle this situation internally.”

Shane wondered if he was going to “handle it” just like the last time Shane came to him in confidence about a situation with Dallas.

Theriault leaned back in his chair, seemingly exhausted by the infighting. Shane had been exerting a great deal of physical energy for almost four hours straight and yet Theriault was the one who looked like he needed a long nap and some electrolytes.

“I wish you hadn’t done that,” Theriault laid into him. “We can afford to lose Pike for a couple games, but not you. If someone was going to throw a punch, you should have let him do it.”

Shane wasn’t some princess locked away in a tall tower that needed saving.

“With all due respect Coach, I can defend myself.”

Theriault just shook his head.

“Shane, you’re the Captain,” he said. “If I can’t trust you to keep the players in line without punching them, then maybe...” he twisted the knife, “maybe you’re not the right man for the job.”

It was a bluff. He wouldn't switch up the roster this close to playoffs. And his team had his back, not Dallas's. They would stick up for him if it came down to it.

Shane didn't let himself react. He'd had enough of reacting impulsively tonight.

“Did you hear what he said to me and Hayden,” Shane asked calmly.

When Theriault didn't respond, Shane continued. “He used a homophobic slur on the ice. That’s against our anti-bullying and harassment policies. Is he going to be punished for that?”

Theriault looked uncomfortable. “I didn't hear him say anything.”

“Hayden heard it too,” Shane said.

“Why would he even call you that,” Theriault asked, putting the conversational burden back on Shane.

Because I am one.

“Because he’s an asshole.”

“He’s just giving you a hard time. My buddies and I used to say much worse back in the day,” Theriault said, as if that was some kind of great excuse. “You can’t let that stuff get to you.”

It was easy for him to say. He didn’t have to stand there and be called that word in front of everyone. It was humiliating. It made his blood boil just thinking about it.

“I’m telling you as my coach,” Shane seethed. “If you don’t discipline him somehow, I’m going to have to file a formal report.”

“On what grounds?”

Shane was suddenly very grateful that he had recently reviewed a number of different university policies. He wasn’t doing it with Dallas in mind, but it would still be useful.

“Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.”

“But you’re not gay,” Theriault said.

A heavy silence filled the room. Shane kept quiet for long enough for Theriault to realize that he’d fucked up.

“Sorry,” Theriault said, his apology coming far too late to be sincere. “I – I didn’t know.”

“That’s not the point,” Shane argued. “He shouldn’t be allowed to say those things to anyone, regardless of their sexuality.”

Shane paused and calculated whether it was worth raising hell.

“We could report him to the university. But I’m hoping you can deal with him before things have to go that far.”

Shane was making veiled threats now. He had to tread very carefully.

“What would you have me do? Kick him off the team?” Theriault said it as though it were an impossible request. “He’s an excellent player.”

“He’s a horrible person.”

Theriault didn’t disagree with him. “That may be true.”

“Who is more valuable to this team, Dallas or me?”

The answer was so obvious that the question didn’t require a verbal response.

After a few seconds, Shane said, “Exactly. You need me more than you need him.”

Theriault shook his head, disappointedly. As if Shane had somehow let him down.

“I’m going to pretend I didn’t hear that,” Theriault said. “Go home. You need to get a clear head.”

Shane’s head was perfectly clear. Possibly clearer than it had ever been. Dallas Kent did not deserve his spot on their team.

fuck dallas kent

like and subscribe for more :)

Chapter 11: Shane

Chapter Notes

hello :))

there are now more than 200 of you subscribed to this story so i hope you're enjoying it!!! if you are, let me know in the comments!

this is my first attempt at a multi-chapter fic so i don't know how long it will take me to finish, but hopefully it will be worth the wait!

also, there are a few exciting reveals coming up soon (*cough cough* ilya's wife) so buckle up!

but for now, back to smut

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

After scoring the game-winning goal, Shane should have been on top of the world. He should have been celebrating the victory with his teammates and living his best life.

Instead, he was going back to his dorm room to sulk and replay the night in his head on a loop.

He didn't regret getting into a fight, even though he knew better than to let himself lose control like that. He accepted that he did what needed to be done. How was he supposed to live with himself if he let himself be spoken to so disrespectfully by another player? He was preserving his dignity. Casual homophobia is not something that he should be expected to tolerate. He wasn't going to keep his head up and just take one for the team.

Once he reached his dorm, he took a brief shower, just to wash off the shame and disappointment of the day's events. He kept the water cold as a self-inflicted punishment for his inability to suppress his anger. Then he changed into a fresh pair of shorts and a t-shirt, making a conscious choice to wear something without his university logo, and crawled into bed around 9:30, ready to pass out.

When his mind couldn't immediately find sleep, he opened his phone and started mindlessly scrolling. Shane knew that exposing his eyes to blue light before bedtime was a cardinal sin, but he was simply too anxious to shut his brain off fully yet.

He had been scrolling the latest U-Sports statistics for the past five minutes when he received an incoming call request from Rozanov. He stared at the notification for a couple seconds, debating whether to answer.

He answered on the third ring.

Groggily, Shane asked, "Rozanov?"

A man's voice came through the phone. "Hollander?"

"It's late. Why are you calling me?"

"Where are you?"

Shane thought about lying and saying that he had gone out with friends or to a party on campus, but Rozanov always seemed to know when Shane was being dishonest.

"In bed," Shane told the truth.

He heard some static on the other line.

"Don't talk dirty to me, Hollander."

Shane blushed in the dark room.

“What do you want, Rozanov?”

There was a momentary silence on the line.

“Can you come over?”

Where to? His apartment?

“I just brushed my teeth,” Shane argued.

“Don’t care. Need to see you.”

“I’m in my pajama –”

“You can wear whatever you want,” Rozanov cut him off. “Just come over.”

Who did he think he was talking to? There was no *how are you*, no *how’s your hand*, no *good game today*. Just a rude demand to drop everything and come meet him for sex. Sure, he didn’t specifically say anything about sex, but it was the implication. Right? With Rozanov, sex was always on the table.

“But –”

“Can you or not?”

They never met at Rozanov’s apartment outside of their Friday night lessons, and Shane was worried that agreeing to meet him outside of the previously agreed upon times may be setting

a dangerous precedent.

“Give me an hour,” Shane said. He needed to take another - more thorough - shower before going to see him.

“Half an hour,” Rozanov countered.

Shane offered a compromise. “Forty-five minutes.”

“Text me when you get here.”

“I know the drill.”

Shane knocked on the door and Rozanov opened it almost instantly, like he had been standing behind the wall waiting for him to arrive.

He seemed concerned. “Don’t hurt yourself,” he said, staring down at Shane’s swollen hand.

“I punched him with my right hand,” Shane reminded him. “My left hand is fine.”

“Yes, I saw.”

As soon as he was ushered safely inside, Rozanov reached out to grab Shane’s arm and pull it towards him for closer inspection.

“Let me see,” Rozanov said sternly.

Shane wouldn't let him look for very long.

“I'm fine,” he assured, wiggling his arm away. “I saw the team doctor before I left. It's just a few scratches.”

Rozanov wouldn't accept that answer.

“Hollander,” he said, his eyes like steel. “Give me your hand, now.”

This wasn't an argument that Shane was going to win.

Shane relented, and Rozanov pulled his hand up to his eyeline, mulling it over for any injuries that weren't immediately visible.

There were bright red scrape marks at the base of Shane's knuckles where his fist had made contact with Dallas's cheek, that were already beginning to scab over.

“Are you sure your fingers are not broken?”

Shane smiled at how insistent Rozanov was being about ensuring that he was safe. “I think I would know if my fingers were broken.”

Rozanov kissed the soft pads of each of Shane's fingers, before gently kissing each one of his bruises, which were getting progressively darker as the evening went on.

It stung a little, but the mushy feeling in Shane's stomach more than made up for it.

Shane made noise when Rozanov put too much pressure directly on one of his worse bruises.

“Ow!”

Rozanov stopped. “Are you hurt? Did I hurt you?” Shane recognized the panic in his voice.

“No,” Shane said firmly. “Feels nice. I’m just a bit sore.”

He carefully studied Shane’s upper-half for any abnormalities. Rozanov had become acquainted with every inch of him by now. He would probably be able to tell if something looked different.

“I’m really fine,” Shane argued, growing increasingly tired of feeling like a victim.

Rozanov was pawing at the edges of his shirt. “Take this off.” Shane raised his hands above his head and let Rozanov remove the shirt and let it fall on the ground beneath them.

Shane tried to lean in for a kiss and to help take Rozanov’s shirt off too, but Rozanov was too busy scanning his torso for abrasions.

“He didn’t even land a hit on me,” Shane pointed out.

Rozanov looked up and met Shane’s gaze. His eyes were fiery and certain. “He’s lucky he didn’t. I would have beat his ugly fucking face until it caved in.”

Jesus Christ.

That would have been a spectacle. Rozanov coming down from the stands, onto the ice and beating Dallas's ass in front of a crowd full of people.

Picturing the scene made Shane go lightheaded.

"I can't believe you actually hit someone," Rozanov expressed shock.

Shane's face went long. He muttered a half-apology. "I know I shouldn't have hit him."

He waited for Rozanov to berate him. To tell him that his actions were embarrassing and reflected badly on him and his team.

Instead, Rozanov ran a soft finger over Shane's cheek. "No, I am not mad at you. You were defending yourself."

Shane breathed a sigh of relief that Rozanov understood. At least someone did. Shane's motivations weren't nefarious. He wasn't an inherently violent person. He just couldn't allow that kind of behaviour to go unchecked. Not on his watch. Not when his teammates looked up to him.

"It was fucking hot," Rozanov growled.

At that revelation, Shane perked up all of a sudden. "It was?"

Rozanov wiggled his eyebrows. "You made me so hard," he disclosed. "I wanted to fuck you right there in front of everyone. Show them how well their captain takes it. That would shut him up, hmm?"

Shane didn't think that he'd like that very much. But there was something erotic about the notion of being fucked on the rink in the middle of a game that ignited his competitive spirit. While under Rozanov's tutelage, his sexual talents had grown exponentially in such a short

period of time. And the idea of people witnessing how good he was at it filled him with a twisted sense of accomplishment.

“Why didn’t you,” Shane joked.

“Next time,” Rozanov promised.

“Deal.”

It was a pointless bet, since Shane wasn’t planning on getting into any more heated arguments during games.

Rozanov ran his beefy hands over Shane’s smooth, unharmed chest. “Are you sure he didn’t hurt you?”

Not physically, at least.

“Yes,” Shane said softly, feeling more emotional than he should have been in the circumstances. It was just a dumb fight. It happened to other players all the time. Just not to him.

“You are not in any pain?”

Shane wondered how many times he was going to keep asking.

“Yes Rozanov, I’m fine.” He held Rozanov’s hand, threading their fingers together. “I promise. I wouldn’t lie to you.”

Rozanov nodded in reluctant acceptance. He seemed calmer. “Okay. Go sit on the bed and wait for me.”

Shane’s raised a suspicious eyebrow. “Where are you going?”

Rozanov looked at him like he had no right to ask.

“I’ll go wait on the bed.”

Shane had stripped down to his boxers and was lying on his back splayed out on the mattress, when he finally heard Rozanov enter the bedroom.

He sat up just enough to catch Rozanov lightly tossing something on the floor, but not enough to see what it was.

Rozanov curled up beside him in bed and began tracing gentle circles on his chest. He whispered in his ear.

“I don’t think your last doctor did a thorough examination,” Rozanov said, tugging at the elastic of his waistband. “I need to look at the rest of you just to be safe.”

Shane’s cheeks turned a deep shade of scarlet.

“It’s important to be thorough,” Shane agreed. “I can’t be too careful.”

Rozanov trailed a greedy finger from Shane’s belly button to his pelvis.

“Does this hurt?”

“No,” Shane answered quickly.

“What about here?” Rozanov cupped Shane’s balls and smiled up at him.

Shane scoffed. “Really?”

“I had to ask,” Rozanov shrugged. “Pesky insurance company wants me to check everywhere.”

Rozanov lowered his head and gave a soft lick to the underside of Shane’s balls, before pulling the left one into his mouth and sucking on it.

Shane shrieked with pleasure.

“Everything seems good here.” Rozanov gave his stamp of approval.

He ran a hand under Shane’s ass, lifting him off the mattress and earning a small moan. Then he slithered his head downwards towards the head of the bed, and pried open Shane’s legs. He gently nibbled on his right upper thigh.

He rolled his tongue over Shane’s entrance and Shane’s whole body jerked.

“You seem to be sensitive here.” He ran a finger along Shane’s rim, making him shudder.

“Rozan — cut it out,” Shane said breathily. “I’m okay. I promise. Will you please jus – just fuck me already?”

“Yes,” Rozanov assured. Shane’s body relaxed. “Once I know that it is safe, I’m going to check for internal injuries too.”

Shane rolled his eyes and bit his bottom lip.

“You’re sick,” Shane said.

“No, Hollander, I am the doctor,” Rozanov corrected. “Please try to keep up.”

“I didn’t me– nevermind.”

The teasing had crossed over from playful to agonizing.

Rozanov pressed a wet finger against Shane’s hole. *When had he gotten lube?* Shane was too horny to pay attention to what was going on around him or to keep up with Rozanov’s evolving doctor roleplay.

Had the student-teacher fantasy already grown stale? As if being in bed with a student wasn’t enough of a taboo, now he wanted him to pretend to be his patient too?

“You might feel some light pressure,” Rozanov warned as he slid his index finger inside of Shane up to the second knuckle.

Shane’s muscles clenched and then allowed him in.

“I’m perfectly healthy,” Shane protested. “I just need your dick in me.”

“Yes baby,” he hummed, no longer in character. “Beg for it. Beg for my cock.”

Shane roughly grabbed a handful of Rozanov’s curly hair and forced his head up. “Put your mouth on me now.”

Rozanov shushed him. “Relax. Lie back,” he instructed.

Shane frustratedly lay back and rested his head on the pillow. He instinctively folded his hands over his stomach to cover himself.

Rozanov pried them away. “Let me see you.”

Shane obeyed without question, dropping his hands at his sides.

“You are so good, Shane.” Rozanov said, kissing down the middle of his chest in pure devotion. “Always so good for me.”

Shane didn’t feel like a good person. He was a fuck up. He got into a fight on the ice because he couldn’t keep his emotions in check.

Rozanov’s mouth found Shane’s half-hard dick and took it in his mouth. He didn’t start sucking in earnest yet. He just swirled his tongue around the tip, getting it wet.

“I’m proud of you.”

Shane held his breath. “Why?” His voice cracked. “For what?”

“For standing up for yourself,” Rozanov replied. “For not taking shit from anyone. I’m proud of you, Shane.”

Tears stung at Shane’s eyelids hearing Rozanov’s sincere praise. He needed to pull himself together.

It took a few more moments to even register that Rozanov had just used his first name. He hadn’t heard him use it since that day in his office almost a month ago.

Rozanov sank his mouth down onto him again. When he had swallowed him nearly down to the base, he looked up at Shane to watch his face contort with pleasure as he sucked him off.

“Feels so good,” Shane panted. “Love your mouth.”

Then Rozanov added his hand into the equation, stroking Shane’s shaft onto his buttery tongue so that there wasn’t any part of Shane’s dick that wasn’t receiving some form of stimulation.

Shane could feel his balls drawing tighter. He was already going to come before even having anything inside him.

Seemingly sensing Shane’s predicament, Rozanov stopped what he was doing entirely.

“Pace yourself,” he said. “You’re going to need your energy.”

Shane’s breath hitched. “Wh — what are you going to do to me?”

“I am going to give you something special tonight,” Rozanov informed him.

Oh. Shane wondered if Rozanov's surprise had something to do with wherever he went for five whole minutes when he left Shane alone.

"And what's that?"

"Best orgasm of your life."

Shane's stomach sank. He refused, shaking his head. "I – I don't deserve it. Not after how I played tonight."

Rozanov cocked his head to one side. "What do you mean? You won. You scored the only goal. You should be proud."

Shane had played fine. Not perfect, but good enough. But he had let his temper get the better of him. He was annoyed with himself. He thought Rozanov would be disappointed too.

"I think I was just nervous," Shane admitted.

Rozanov nodded slowly, perhaps realizing how his presence at the game had contributed to Shane's mistakes during the game.

"Because I was there?"

He didn't say it in his normal mocking tone. He was being sincere.

"I think so."

Rozanov pressed two fingers to Shane's chin, lifted his face and kissed him tenderly on the lips.

“I saw you talking to those girls.”

Shane threw the words away, pretending not to care. But Rozanov wasn't stupid enough to fall for it.

“And you were distracted?”

Shane nodded. “Yes.”

“I am sorry,” Rozanov apologized. “I promise to make it up to you. I will make you come so fucking hard, you won't be able to move without thinking about when I was last inside you.”

It was impossible for Shane to conceal the way that his body was trembling as he watched Rozanov reach for something off the side of the bed. He found what he was searching for and held it behind his back, really drawing out the big reveal.

When he finally showed him what he was hiding, Shane laughed dryly.

He furrowed his brow. “A fleshlight? Seriously?”

This was what he wanted to show him? The “best orgasm of his life”... please.

“So you have used one before?”

Shane's eyes narrowed. “I'm familiar with the concept,” he clarified. “I've never actually tried one.”

Rozanov ran a finger along the sleeve before stuffing his fingers inside the opening.

“I’m going to fuck you with this.”

Shane swallowed. “Have you ever used it on anyone else before,” he asked, concerned about the potential safety risks.

Rozanov smirked. “Only on myself.”

Shane wondered if that was supposed to feel special. If he should be that Rozanov was offering him something that he didn’t offer to anyone else.

“Do you want to try?”

Shane inspected the toy with a curious look on his face.

“Do you need a tutorial or something?”

Shane glared at him. “No, I’m sure it’s not complicated.”

“Exactly,” Rozanov agreed. “And it is good to try new things once and a while.”

Rozanov planted himself between Shane’s legs, spreading them apart. He drizzled a decent amount of lube into the opening, before hovering the device over Shane’s dick and maneuvering it inside.

The toy made a wet gurgling sound as it enveloped Shane’s penis. He could feel the suction gripping him like a tight hug, making him feel good. But it paled in comparison to the real thing.

“Good, right?”

“I prefer your mouth,” Shane said frankly.

“This is better,” Rozanov said. “Does not have a gag reflex.”

Rozanov started to shift the toy up and down.

“Neither do you.”

Rozanov’s mouth twisted. “True,” he conceded.

“It’s not as warm,” Shane noted.

“Maybe I need a break,” Rozanov suggested. “Ever think of that? And this way I can talk to you while the toy does the work.”

“Seems kind of lazy.”

Rozanov was indignant. He had struck a chord.

“Are you calling me lazy?”

“No,” Shane said innocently. “Never.”

Rozanov was the opposite of lazy. He was relentless. He pushed Shane to his limits, and with Shane's urging, even sometimes blew past them. He knew when to go harder and when to pull back. He could take Shane apart and put him back together all in the span of a couple hours one day a week.

He bent down to nibble Shane's earlobe and whispered, "I want you to fuck the toy while I fuck you."

Shane pulled himself out of the toy, which was trying its best to hang onto its grip. Then he rolled on top, straddling Rozanov's hips, and Rozanov got to work on getting Shane ready to take him. He was looser than usual because he had taken an *extra* long shower before coming over, but he still needed a little more help.

"Relax," Rozanov said calmly. "I've got you."

Shane closed his eyes and nodded, focusing on the exquisite stretch of Rozanov's two fingers as they scissored inside him.

"We have all night."

It was the exact series of words that Shane needed to hear. It was possibly the most erotic thing that Rozanov - that anyone - had ever said to him.

This part of sex sometimes made him feel like he was a burden. He didn't like that all the focus was on him alone. And the anxiety of taking too long only made it take longer. But Rozanov always made him feel safe during it. Like there was no pressure, no rush. Rozanov was going to take his time with him this time. Reward him.

He didn't understand how he was ever supposed to move on when the sex was so perfect. How could he be expected to do this with another person? How could they possibly be this gentle? This respectful? Would he ever find someone else who was filthy and loving and tender and rough all mixed together into one perfect man?

He felt the heat rise in his belly. He allowed Rozanov to bring him right to the brink before he opened his mouth to speak.

“Okay, okay,” Shane said quickly. “I’m ready.”

Without uttering another word, he lifted himself off of Rozanov’s fingers. Shane felt Rozanov’s hands hovering on his hips as he slowly lowered himself onto Rozanov’s cock, feeling the familiar burn as Rozanov bottomed out.

Shane grabbed the toy from the mattress and inserted himself inside it once again, studying the rhythm of Rozanov’s thrusts so that he could match them. Shane was like a dog in heat, frantically thrusting into the toy as Rozanov pounded into him.

A bead of sweat dislodged from a pore in his forehead and dismounted on Rozanov’s upper lip.

Rozanov’s eyes flickered to his. “That’s right,” he said. “Come for me, baby.”

It couldn’t have been longer than thirty seconds, but he could feel his orgasm begin to rip through him. Any rational thought in Shane’s neurotic little head evaporated as his vision whited-out. As he came, he nearly lost his balance and toppled over.

At some point in the five seconds of time Shane had lost, Rozanov must have come too. He didn’t even feel it when it happened.

Neither man dared to move for a while. Rozanov was panting and desperately trying to catch his breath - which wasn’t unusual. The difference was that this time, Shane was too. He had never come like that before. He didn’t even realize that it was possible for an orgasm to steal your vision and ability to form proper sentences.

When Shane’s breathing was beginning to return to normal, Rozanov pulled the toy off Shane’s dick with a satisfying squelching noise. He hummed, pleased with himself for

thinking of the idea.

Shane flopped over next to Rozanov on the bed, and they switched places. Then Rozanov flipped the toy upside down, letting gravity pull the fluids downwards onto Shane's stomach.

Shane watched in bewilderment as his come slowly dripped out of the head of the toy. He knew that he came harder than usual, but it was still a little surprising to see all of it oozing out into a puddle on his bare skin.

"It's been less than twenty-four hours," Rozanov observed, "And you had all this inside you. Interesting. Maybe I need to use this on you more often."

When the toy stopped leaking fluid, Rozanov pressed his fingers inside, sloshing them around. He removed his fingers and sucked them into his mouth, swallowing the remnants. Shane winced. It looked extremely unsanitary.

"You need to wash that," Shane said, always concerned about cleanliness as a top priority.

"Should I be jealous? I think it made you come more than I did."

"It's just a piece of plastic," Shane reasoned. "I can't replace you with plastic."

Rozanov winked. "Good to know."

He grabbed a couple tissues and handed them to Shane to wipe himself down. When he was done, Shane threw the damp tissues onto the side table without a care in the world. They would deal with the mess later.

He nestled his head in the crook of Rozanov's neck, keeping one hand rested on his chest. The results of Rozanov's orgasm were still inside him, and the feeling was becoming more

noticeable by the second. He should have gotten up and gone to the bathroom. But he couldn't make himself move yet.

"Can you speak," Rozanov joked. "Or did I fuck the words out of you?"

Shane cast his eyes towards the ceiling. "No, I can talk. Just don't want to."

"What do you want to do instead?"

"Nothing, I just want to be here with you," Shane said with frightening honesty. Normally, such an admission would embarrass him. But right now he was concentrating on the heat of Rozanov's body and the warmth that Rozanov had deposited inside him.

Rozanov pulled Shane's arm over his stomach so that he was holding onto his body like a pillow. Shane was starting to drift off. He let his heavy eyelids rest for a couple seconds, which easily turned into a couple of minutes.

He jolted awake and realized that it was time for him to go.

"It's really late," Shane said, replaying the same script that he had been following after each of their encounters. "I should get going."

Rozanov's brows drew closer. "You can sleep here, if you want."

The words were shallow and flippant and not conducive to a sincere invitation.

"You want me to sleep over?"

"If you want," Rozanov offered.

Having a sleepover at Rozanov's secret sex apartment was not something that had even crossed Shane's radar. He wasn't sure if he was ready for Rozanov to see him with tangled hair and morning breath. He wanted to stay as his perfect, sexy secret, just a little while longer, before real life crept in and ruined their plans.

Shane was still undecided.

"I don't know," Shane said.

To his surprise, Rozanov kept attempting to persuade him. "It is no problem. I was going to sleep here anyway. I bought groceries, so you will not starve."

Shane reddened. He wasn't thinking about food at that moment. He was more concerned about what spending the night together meant. He didn't want Rozanov to sense that he was getting attached and start to pull away.

He needed to keep things casual. Not only because that was their arrangement all along, but also for his own sanity. He couldn't let his mind be tricked into thinking that this was more than just mind-blowing sex once a week.

Shane started to yawn. It really was late.

"Look at this," Rozanov said, collecting a stray eyelash from Shane's cheek. "You are falling asleep on me."

Shane murmured against Rozanov's chest, "I'm not sleeping."

Rozanov pressed his lips to Shane's left temple. "Stay here with me," he breathed into Shane's forehead.

Shane wasn't merely tired, he was exhausted. This was the first time all day that his mind had been quiet.

Rozanov had that effect on him.

"Is that weird," Shane asked self-consciously.

"No." Rozanov shrugged. "We are both tired... and," he pressed his fingers into Shane's inner thigh, "I would really like to fuck you again tomorrow."

Shane felt comforted, if slightly disheartened, that Rozanov was only offering to share his bed for the night because of the promise of more sex the next day.

"Okay," Shane gave in to his impulses again. "I'll stay."

Shane watched with sleep-drenched eyes as Rozanov's lips curled into a cheesy smile. He covered both of their nude bodies in a blanket, and attentively brushed his fingers through Shane's hair, lulling him to sleep.

Was this what it felt like to have a boyfriend?

"Sleep tight," Rozanov teased.

"Fuck you," Shane bantered. "Goodnight."

Chapter End Notes

oooh sleepover!!

like and subscribe for more (we're like seven kudos away from 300)

Chapter 12: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there are now 225 of you subscribed :) if you're liking the story so far, give me motivation in the comments

ilya pov incoming!!

also just fyi i'm writing this at night so if there are more spelling/grammar errors than usual, that is likely why

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

Ilya woke up the next morning to Shane's drool on his sheets.

Shane was nestled in his arms and clinging to him like a life raft. For a solitary moment, he thought that Shane might be waking up too. Ilya watched in astonishment as Shane scrunched up his cute nose and flared his nostrils. But his eyes stayed closed.

Ilya refused to move in case he might unintentionally rouse his younger lover. He looked so peaceful. He wanted to let him sleep for as long as possible. Clearly he needed the rest.

Why did Shane have to be so fucking perfect?

He was making it really difficult to pretend that there was nothing more between them.

There were eight weeks of classes left until Shane would no longer be his student. That meant that in eight weeks, Ilya would have to call things off for good. That way Shane could go home for the summer break and use his newfound sexual knowledge to finally have some fun.

That's what needed to happen. Ilya had never retained a student once the semester was over and he wasn't about to start now. It wouldn't be fair to them. Eventually, each one of them had to learn to spread their wings and fly on their own.

As far as their lessons went, Ilya was still finding new things to teach Shane each week, and Shane was continuing to show tremendous improvements in all areas of intimacy. But Ilya knew that inevitably Shane was going to have to graduate Ilya's program and move on to date someone his own age. He deserved to have a boyfriend that he could be seen with in public. A normal, healthy relationship. Not whatever the hell this was.

But there was another reason why his gut was telling him that his affair with Shane couldn't continue - Ilya was getting too comfortable. He couldn't pinpoint exactly when the switch flipped for him, but he'd noticed that there had been a few times when they were together, that Ilya found himself wanting to just have regular sex without an educational component. He wanted to spend hours exploring each inch of other's bodies without the pressure of always having to impress each other. He wanted to have lazy missionary sex on the couch in the middle of the afternoon. He wanted to give Shane a blowjob while he was only half-awake and his eyes were still filled with sleep. He wanted to take a bath together. He wanted to start their weekdays by getting Shane off in the shower before leaving for work. He wanted it all.

To Ilya's sheer horror, he also found himself wanting to engage in non-sex activities. Sometimes he was reading a particularly interesting book and he'd think about recommending it to Shane, despite not knowing what kind of books Shane enjoyed reading or if he even liked to read. He thought about the restaurants he would take Shane to if he could. If it were possible to be seen in public together without blowing up his entire life and career in one fell swoop.

Shane's scraped-up hand was hanging over the side of the bed. It was difficult to believe that only yesterday, the beautiful man who was presently sleeping as soundly as a log, had used this fist to bring another grown man to his knees. Ilya found that thought extremely arousing.

He had woken up with a hard-on, but that wasn't unusual. What was atypical, is that his erection was pressed into the dimples on Shane's lower back.

They were spooning.

Ilya was confident that they had not fallen asleep in that position, but it's the position they woke up in.

Ilya was already mentally planning out the remainder of their morning together.

Shane would slowly open his eyes and then they would kiss for a while, take a shower together...

Maybe he would fuck Shane so hard that he would fall asleep again. He would keep fucking him forever if that were possible. If he didn't have a job to get to everyday or a wife waiting for him at home.

Or a stupid refractory period.

Ilya felt Shane move against him. He was awake.

Shane mumbled a soft objection. "I haven't brushed my teeth yet."

Ilya smiled to himself. *So fucking perfect.* He'd barely opened his eyes and he was already thinking about how to take good care of him.

"Don't care," Ilya said.

"You haven't brushed your teeth yet either."

Ilya knew he was fucked when even Shane's whininess was a turn on. He couldn't imagine ever willingly putting up with this degree of neurosis from anyone else.

Shane squirmed. "I need to shower. I'm filthy."

“I love it when you are filthy.”

"Rozanov," Shane breathed.

He loved how Shane said his name like he was in trouble.

Ilya provided an alternative. “If I brush my teeth, then will you let me fuck you?”

“Mmhmmm,” Shane moaned.

Ilya reached around to Shane’s ass and started playing with him... until he realized that he was still wet from when Ilya came inside him the night before.

What the fuck? This was insane. This was fucking insane. Was Shane trying to kill him?

They must’ve fallen asleep before he could even —

Shane groaned. “Sore,” he mumbled under his breath.

Ilya figured that a little tenderness was to be expected. He had never tried to fuck Shane twice in such close succession before.

And they’d had sex on Friday night too.

Holy shit.

This realization set off a mild panic in Ilya's brain. That's three days in a row. He hadn't gone without Shane in three days. And he was already having withdrawals. This was very very bad.

Once a week was the rule. It had always been Ilya's rule. Sure, they were still hooking up in his office occasionally, but that didn't count. Not really. It was just meant to hold them over until Fridays.

This can't be healthy. Ilya's sex drive had always been high, but this was something else. Because this level of yearning wasn't even about the physical act of having sex. His desire was targeted. It was directed at one person and one person alone.

Shane.

He couldn't keep Shane trapped in this apartment with him all the time. Shane needed to have his own life. He should be able to go to keg parties with his friends and meet people his own age and make memories while he was still young. Ilya would have given anything to be young again. To be naive and optimistic. To wake up in the morning without his shoulder or his back giving him trouble. And here he was, letting Shane squander this precious time in his life, something that he could never get back, because Ilya was too selfish to let him go.

This had to be the last time for a while. He needed to wean himself off of Shane like any other addictive chemical. Three fucking days was way too much.

When was the last time he had been with someone other than Shane? The fact that it took him more than a second to answer was not inspiring confidence.

Ilya politely adjusted his erect dick so that it wasn't insistently pressing into Shane's back. He wanted to be respectful, even though he felt like he was going to die if someone didn't touch him right this second.

"Do you not want to," Ilya asked, trying really hard not to sound disappointed.

Shane attempted to bury his head in the pillow. He couldn't see Shane's face, but he imagined that he looked uncomfortable.

When Shane didn't answer right away, Ilya made the choice for him.

"Let's pause," Ilya offered.

"No," Shane said insistently. "No." He rubbed his backside against Ilya's cock, creating an exhilarating friction, and brought Ilya's hand around to grasp his hip. "I want to. I want to feel you inside me."

Ilya slid his dick between Shane's ass cheeks, pantomiming sex. Maybe they could do it like this. That way there didn't have to be any penetration. Ilya was pretty sure that he could come from this.

"This is nice too," Ilya said, giving a kiss to Shane's neck.

"Inside," Shane said, leaving no room for misunderstanding. "Put your dick inside me."

Ilya was still hesitant. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt Shane, even if Shane was asking - begging - him to do it.

"I don't know if that's such a good idea right now," Ilya said gently.

That was the wrong answer, apparently.

Shane grabbed a hold of Ilya's penis and guided it towards his hole. Ilya gasped as Shane maneuvered the tip inside of him, savouring the tightness and the heat. As Ilya pushed himself inside, Shane let out a soft cry.

Ilya didn't start thrusting yet, not until he made sure that Shane could take it.

"Hurt?"

"Yeah, but I like it. Keep going."

He thrust once and Shane shivered.

"More," Shane demanded. "Need more."

"You will tell me if it hurts?"

"Yeah," Shane said. "But I can take it."

Ilya rolled over on top of Shane, took hold of Shane's chin and forced him to look in his eyes.

"No, you will not just *take it*," Ilya told him. "You will enjoy it or else I will stop."

Shane nodded, smiling mischievously. "You're cute when you're mean."

Shane was always cute. Especially because he didn't realize how insanely adorable he was being right now.

Ilya pressed into him fully, giving Shane everything he could take. He thrust recklessly, trusting Shane to tell him if he wanted him to stop.

Shane was whimpering beneath him and had swallowed his lower lip in an attempt to stay quiet. They didn't need to be quiet. Sure, their neighbours were probably still asleep, but Ilya didn't know those people. And what was there to be embarrassed about anyway? He was in bed with a beautiful man who was letting him fuck him without even brushing his teeth first. He didn't care if his neighbours knew he had a very active sex life. Might as well let them hear.

The bed was squeaking in time with Ilya's thrusts. The sex was so rough and yet there was something about the way that Shane had given himself to Ilya so completely, that made what they were doing feel extremely intimate. He couldn't remember the last time someone had made him feel like this. There may have been a few times when he was younger that he felt something resembling it, but the fact that he couldn't bring any of those moments to mind only proved that it couldn't have been as good as this was.

Maybe he had felt something close to this in those first few years with his wife before they moved to Canada. Before they were married. But it was never exactly like it was right now. There had always been a piece missing.

For the longest time, Ilya had wondered if he was the problem. If he was simply incapable of truly loving another person without having a hidden agenda. He didn't think that he could enjoy sex unless he was getting away with something.

But right now, none of that mattered. What he was doing with Shane didn't feel wrong or illicit. It felt like he was exactly where he was meant to be all along.

Shane was scratching him. Dragging his nails across Ilya's back like a horny kitten.

"There you go baby," Ilya said. "Take it out on me if you need to."

With Ilya's permission, Shane dug his sharp fingernails into Ilya's pale skin, making him hiss.

"Fuck yes," Ilya howled. "Fucking hurt me. Make me feel it."

Shane wailed. "More. More! I need you. I fucking need you."

Later, his wife would probably ask where those scratches came from. But that was future-Ilya's problem.

Shane's hand slammed against the headboard.

"Fuck," Shane screamed. "Fuck, *Ilya*, I'm gonna come. Fuck. Fuck me."

Ilya nearly froze. This was an interesting development. He decided that it was bad. Very bad. Regardless of how much he enjoyed the way his name sounded on Shane's tongue.

It was a slip. Something that was said in the heat of the moment. It didn't have to be anything more than that.

"Me too." Ilya let Shane know how close he was. "Come with me, Shane. I want to come with you."

If it wasn't simultaneous, then it was too close to call. Ilya wasn't sure which one of them went off first, and he really didn't care.

Shane cried as he came undone on Ilya's cock. Tears escaped his eyelids and fell onto his cheeks as Ilya collapsed on top of him. For an eternity, they were just a pile of jumbled limbs, writhing and panting.

"I'm going to pull out now."

Normally, this wasn't an action that needed to be discussed. But after the way that Ilya had just abused Shane's hole, he figured that he would give him the heads-up.

"Okay," Shane said, wiping down his face.

Shane sniffled and a small bead of snot trickled out of his nose.

"Tell me you are alright," Ilya said.

"I'm fine," Shane promised. "It was just... it was a lot."

"For me too," Ilya admitted.

After everything, Shane had earned a bath. He placed Shane's arms over his shoulders so that he could pick him up off the bed.

"Where are you taking me," Shane asked. He didn't seem to be objecting.

"To get clean."

Shane allowed Ilya to carry him to the bathtub. Ilya gently placed him inside, turned the tap and began running hot water.

"Baths don't actually get you clean," Shane stated.

"But they feel good," Ilya said. "They help me to relax."

Shane raised a curious eyebrow. "You take baths?"

Yes, Ilya took baths. Was there something wrong with a man who takes baths?

"Sometimes," Ilya said defensively.

Shane ran his hands through the bath water, making waves. "Do you have any bubbles?"

Ilya reacted like he had been accused of committing murder. "No, I do not have bubbles. I am a man."

"A man who takes baths," Shane teased.

Ilya shut off the tap when the tub was filled half way to the top. He grabbed a fresh hand towel and stepped inside the tub slowly. He positioned himself opposite Shane, facing him. The tub was small enough that they couldn't prevent their shins from touching.

Shane smiled awkwardly. "I've never taken a bath with someone before."

Another first, Ilya thought to himself.

Ilya wet the towel in the bathwater and started cleaning Shane, starting with his neck and then moving downwards to his chest, his stomach, his abs.

"Spread," Ilya instructed. He touched the towel to the inside of Shane's thighs, erasing the evidence of their recent encounters.

But Ilya would still have the scratches that Shane etched into his back.

"Tell me if it hurts," Ilya said.

"Doesn't hurt," Shane said. "Feels nice."

Ilya handed the cloth to Shane to allow him to clean himself properly.

"What do you have to do today," Ilya asked curiously. He secretly hoped that Shane would say he had some big plans to have fun tonight. He wanted Shane to be getting the full college experience.

Shane leaned back against the porcelain. "Same old. Catching up on some assignments. Laundry. Stuff like that."

Ilya nodded. That sounded nightmarish. "Sounds fun."

Shane returned the question. "What are you up to today?"

Truthfully, Ilya had no concrete goals for the rest of the day. His wife was out of town speaking at a conference and wouldn't be back until tomorrow. He figured that his plans would likely begin to materialize later in the evening. He would probably grab a beer with Marleau or another one of his buddies. Maybe by chance they would meet a couple of interesting women to show a good time in Montreal. Just like it had played out plenty of times before.

"Nothing really," Ilya said. "Grading papers. Ignoring emails."

The once boiling water had since become lukewarm, and Ilya could tell that Shane was antsy to get out of the bath and put some clothes on again.

"I think I'm clean now," Shane said.

"Can you stay for a while?" Ilya asked. "I can make us breakfast."

Shane seemed surprised by the offer. "Sure," he said casually.

Shane stood up out of the bath and stomped back into the bedroom, sopping wet. He picked up his boxers and his shorts off the floor and started getting dressed. Ilya followed closely behind, exiting the tub and wrapping a towel around his waist. He grabbed his robe from the closet and tied it shut.

"Take your time," Ilya said as Shane was pulling his arms through his shirt. Ilya noted that Shane looked amazing with wet hair. "I'm going to go start the waffles. Do you like blueberries?"

Weeks ago, Ilya had happened to be in the same restaurant as Shane. Shane was with a friend and Ilya wasn't going to approach him outside of school hours. Shane didn't happen to see him, but Ilya approached the woman at the counter after he left and asked for his order. That's when he learned that Shane's breakfast of choice was waffles. Then last night, Ilya had bought separate containers of blueberries, strawberries, raspberries and blackberries at the store because he wasn't sure what kind of berries Shane would prefer.

"I like blueberries," Shane said encouragingly.

Ilya set down a plate in front of Shane and handed him a fork.

"Do you want one or two?"

"One," Shane said.

Ilya placed a single waffle on Shane's plate, but mentally set aside a second one for him if he wanted it later.

Ilya's brain snapped back into focus once he sat down. This was craziness. This needed to end before it went too far.

Who was Ilya kidding, it had already gone too far. He was letting him stay over now? Making love to him in broad daylight? Fucking spooning. Cooking breakfast half-naked.

He didn't even do this type of embarrassingly corny shit with his actual wife.

Who had he become? What happened to him? He was unrecognizable. He was possessed by some carnal demon intent on ruining his life.

This was not a relationship, it was an arrangement. Sex without love. Passion without commitment. It was scheduled and regimented, like any other form of training. That's what this was, wasn't it? Sexual training.

He needed to do something. Open his mouth and say something. Anything.

"When was the last time you had sex with someone who was not me?"

Maybe that was too bold a question for breakfast.

Shane said nothing. He drizzled his waffle in syrup and took a big bite to avoid answering. It was a bad sign.

Ilya was vaguely aware that Shane had been seeing another man for as long as they had been sleeping together. He wanted to be happy for Shane, but he had to be honest, the other guy seemed like a complete loser. Any time Ilya broached the subject of Shane's dating life, Shane prickled. To his knowledge, Shane had been dating this man for months and was still yet to actually fuck him. No wonder Shane was so ready for it all the time.

How would that even work, Ilya wondered. Dating someone and not having sex. What was the point of that? If Shane was his boyfriend, he wouldn't be able to control himself.

"It's been... a while."

Ilya hesitated. He'd been hopeful that maybe Shane had ditched that other guy and found someone else. It was a bit depressing that he hadn't. Shane could do so much better.

"Aren't you seeing someone?"

Shane looked confused. "Huh," he said, like he was hearing this information for the first time. "Oh yeah, right. Yeah I *was* seeing someone. But we uh... broke up."

That was news to Ilya. "When did you break up?"

His answer was vague and added nothing meaningful to their conversation. "A while ago."

Ilya was incensed. The situation was even more dire than he'd initially thought.

"And you did not think to tell me?" Ilya sounded angrier than he had any right to be.

"No," Shane said plainly. "I didn't think you cared."

He shouldn't be so hard on Shane. It wasn't his fault. Ilya should have made sure that he understood the rules. He shouldn't have been making concessions by inviting him to spend the night. He needed to set stricter boundaries so that the lines did not become any more blurry than they already were.

These types of relationships, Ilya had learned over the years, took a delicate balance to keep from going off the rails.

“Shane,” Ilya said as calm as possible. “Are you telling me that you have not had sex with anyone else in the past month?”

Shane nodded. “Yeah, so? What's the big deal?”

It was a huge deal. This was horrible. How could Shane not see that?

If Shane didn't have a backup, then it was going to hurt so much worse when Ilya had to eventually cut him off.

“Are you breaking up with me,” Shane asked. “Because that's what this feels like.”

“We cannot break up,” Ilya said. “We are not in a real relationship.”

“I know that,” Shane said angrily. “I meant, do you not want to see me anymore?”

“I did not say that. But we cannot go on like this forever,” Ilya calmly explained. “I thought that you were dating other men too.”

And there it was. That face. The exact same fucking expression that Becca wore that day in the parking lot when he ended things and broke her heart into a million pieces.

The fucking face that made Ilya’s heart sink.

“I thought you could handle this,” Ilya said harshly. “Maybe I was wrong.”

"Fuck you," Shane said. "I can handle it. Maybe you're the one that can't handle it."

Was Shane a mind-reader now?

"I can handle it," Ilya said.

It was obvious that there was something else that Shane wanted to say, but he chose to keep it to himself.

"Maybe you should have sex with someone else," Ilya suggested.

He regretted his cruel words as soon as they left his mouth.

He watched as Shane's face folded in on itself. He was trying to hide his disappointment, but of course Ilya noticed everything.

He pictured Becca's tear-soaked face. How she begged him not to leave her behind. He felt the phantom pains of the massive pit in his stomach when he read her email years ago. The email where she eviscerated him, questioned his morality, and accused him of preying on her. He had made a mistake with Becca by letting her get too attached. It wasn't healthy. And according to her, it totally fucked up her life. He couldn't do that to someone else. Not to Shane.

Shane deserved better than him.

Shane was staring at the floor. "You want me to have sex with someone else?"

Ilya knew that this was hurting Shane. He knew that Shane was going to believe that he had done something wrong or that he had disappointed Ilya somehow. But sometimes you need to

hurt someone to help them. He would thank him someday. Probably.

Ilya gently nudged him in the right direction. "Isn't that what you want too?"

Shane shrugged. "I don't know."

Ilya knew what he had to do, but it still fucking killed him to do it.

"It would be good for you, I think, to be with someone else."

"Why," Shane asked, wide-eyed. "How do you know what's good for me? Don't I have a choice in this?"

"Of course you do."

Shane had nothing to say, and Ilya wanted to give him the space he needed to process this request.

Finally, Shane nodded and met Ilya's gaze. He looked certain.

"If it'll shut you up," Shane said, "Then fine, I can do that. I can fuck somebody."

That wasn't a good enough answer for Ilya. Shane needed to *want* to fuck someone else.

"Maybe I should start right now," Shane suggested. "Fuck the first guy that I see when I walk out of the building."

This was not the reaction Ilya was expecting. He thought he might see tears, reluctance, but not this. This was almost vengeful.

"You should not have sex with someone just to piss me off."

"Don't tell me what I'm allowed to do," Shane said, pushing his almost-full plate away. "I can do whatever the fuck I want. You're not my boyfriend. You don't get to tell me that I need to fuck other people and then make the rules for under what circumstances I'm allowed to fuck other people. I told you, I can handle it."

Shane rushed out of the kitchen and headed straight for the door. He fumbled with his winter boots. "I'll see you on Friday," Shane said.

This isn't how Ilya wanted the morning to end. Not after the perfect night they'd had.

"Hollander, you don't have to leave."

"It's fine," Shane said. But his voice was heavy. "You don't have to keep being nice to me. I'm a grown man, I don't need you to treat me like a child."

"Shane."

He slammed the door shut and Ilya didn't see him again for over a week. Shane stopped coming to class and he didn't respond to any of Ilya's texts or calls. Selfishly Ilya hoped that the lack of communication meant that Shane was finally following his advice and taking full advantage of his youth. But then he remembered the look on Shane's face when he ran out on him. He was miserable.

His words alone had made Shane miserable. And even though he knew deep down that he was doing the right thing by letting him go, Ilya wasn't adequately prepared to deal with the consequences of living in a world without Shane.

Chapter End Notes

i'm sorry!! i promise they will be happy eventually they just have to suffer a little while longer

like and subscribe for more :)

Chapter 13: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

back with another shane pov!

there's over 250 of you subscribed now, so i hope you're having fun reading along!

sorry for the longer wait between chapters but this one is slightly longer so hopefully it's worth it!

warning: there is a scene in this chapter that has dubious consent/non-consent and rough sex. if you need to skip this one, please do and i won't be offended.

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

It had been almost a week since Shane had run out of Rozanov's apartment after spending a blissful Sunday morning together. He'd cried in the elevator on the way down to the first floor and then shed a few more angry tears in the parking lot while he waited for his Uber driver to arrive and whisk him back to campus.

Shane had never been much of a crier, especially over failed relationships. And this didn't even qualify as a full-fledged relationship. It was a situationship at best. Technically it was an affair.

He hadn't cried when he broke up with Jessica, and they had dated for almost a year. He had a high tolerance for pain, both physical and psychological. He had taken major hits on the ice - ones that required stitches - and never showed any weakness. He had broken bones and never let his agony show on his face.

This was different.

It was so much fucking worse.

And to think that it had started out as the most perfect morning of Shane's entire life.

Before he had run away like a coward, Shane had foolishly let himself imagine what it would be like to start every one of his mornings like that one. Waking up in the arms of someone who made him feel safe, touching each other in a lazy, exploratory way that wasn't rushed or frantic, having passionate, earth-shattering sex, being taken care of afterwards, cleaning each other, eating breakfast. Just doing normal, everyday, mundane things together.

Why wasn't it enough, Shane wondered. Why couldn't he ever be enough? He wasn't a good enough Captain, he was an average student, and now he wasn't even good enough to be fucked.

That same morning, once he had returned to his dorm and crawled into the safety of his bed, Shane realized that the black shirt he was wearing was not his own. He had picked it off the floor, assuming it was his, but it must have belonged to Rozanov. It even smelled like him.

Why didn't Rozanov say anything at breakfast when he saw him wearing it? Why didn't Shane notice that he was wearing another man's clothing for hours?

Was Shane really that out of it that he had taken the wrong shirt? The mistake was made all the more embarrassing by the fact that it was obviously two sizes too big and didn't fit his proportions.

Over the next couple of days, Shane started to wonder if he had subconsciously stolen Rozanov's clothes on purpose, so that he would have an excuse to call him and return it. Or maybe he just took it so that he would have something of Rozanov's to cuddle at night when he was lonely.

He was so pathetic.

Why did it have to matter so much that Shane didn't want to sleep with other men? It was such a dumb rule. It's not like he was even asking for any sort of real commitment anyway. He understood the parameters of their connection and he never pushed for more, regardless of much he wanted to.

Besides, Rozanov was the one who invited Shane to stay with him that night. He was the one who spooned him while they were unconscious. He was the one who interrupted Shane's sleep by pressing himself into his back until Shane couldn't ignore it anymore.

All Shane ever did was cave to what Rozanov wanted, and now he was being punished for it. The universe wasn't being fair. Rozanov wasn't being fair. He was so concerned with Shane becoming attached that he didn't realize that he was completely overreacting.

This was all just a huge misunderstanding. Shane would clear it up. He would show Rozanov just how completely unattached he could be.

Starting tonight.

They were pre-gaming in Rose's dorm room and Shane was letting Rose put makeup on him.

Rose and Lily's dwelling was a lot more decorated than his and Hayden's. It was filled with posters and playbills, along with a series of dresses and hats and other costume pieces that Rose had designed herself. They displayed cherished pictures of their closest friends hung up with clothespins and surrounded by twinkly lights above each of their beds.

Shane's room barely had a mattress and a mini fridge.

"What was the theme again," Shane asked. He despised themed parties because everyone was always out-theming him.

Rose carefully placed a swatch of silver below his left eyebrow.

“Outer space,” she said, sounding unsure. “I just know we’re supposed to dress like slutty aliens.”

Shane nodded, still perplexed. He had no idea what any of that meant, but Rose seemed to have a good handle on things.

Rose hummed like she had something important to say.

“When we get there, I have someone I want to introduce you to. I think you two will really get along.”

Shane wondered what exactly Rose meant by *get along*.

“As a friend,” Shane inquired with a tone of suspicion, “Or a boyfriend?”

He saw Rose’s wicked smile reflected in the mirror.

“Hopefully a boyfriend,” she confirmed. “You are allowed to have a boyfriend right?”

“I guess,” Shane reluctantly agreed.

He felt like he was so broken that no one else would want him. But he couldn’t say that out loud.

“So you’re not planning on changing your major to Russian history,” Rose said with a teasing smirk.

For the past few days, Shane had been relatively tight-lipped about his love life, more so than usual, and Rose was clearly trying to coax some information out of him.

“Definitely not,” Shane confirmed.

Rose took a step back and admired the results of her amateur makeup artistry in the mirror. Shane wasn’t sure if he looked like a real alien (if those existed) or just a man in silver face paint.

“Then good,” she said. “This guy is very cute. Cuter than you, even.”

Shane glared at Rose’s mirrored reflection. “What’s his name, again?”

“Oh shit, I forgot to tell you,” Rose slapped her palm to her forehead and lightly smudged her green-tinted foundation. “His name is Miles. I think you’ll like him. He’s very cute. And he’s single. Seriously Shane this guy is hot as fuck.”

Shane looked at Rose like she’d lost her mind.

“I mean, obviously I don’t swing that way,” she clarified. “But if I did...” She fanned herself with her non-makeup-brush-wielding hand.

Shane figured that this Miles person was probably a nice enough guy, but he wasn’t sure if he was ready to actually *date* someone else yet. What he needed right now was someone who was interested in a strictly confidential, no strings attached, one night stand. Preferably someone who didn’t run in the same circles and that he never had to see again. He didn’t want to make things awkward with his friends. The fact that Miles was Rose’s friend was messier than Shane would have preferred in a potential hookup.

It was ironic that this is where he had ended up, considering that when the semester started he had planned on casually hooking up with a bunch of different guys with diverging looks and personalities. Testing out the dating waters to figure out what he liked before he even thought about settling down and being exclusive with one person.

Then he took one look at Rozanov in a stupid sweater vest and all his well-laid plans went up in flames.

Maybe Rozanov had a point. Sometimes Shane's risk-adverse personality meant that he required a push, and though it could have been delivered more tactfully, he was genuinely trying to help Shane in his own bizarre way. The method had been harsher than Shane would have wanted, but maybe it's exactly what he needed to finally get off his ass, take a step forward and move on with his life.

He was young and attractive and in his sexual prime. It would be a crime to waste all that potential pining over some old married guy who wouldn't remember his name in a few months. Rozanov had probably already moved on to another target.

"How did you meet him," Shane questioned.

Rose was sipping tequila out of a plastic container and leaving her lip-gloss on the rim.

"He's in the theatre department too," she replied once her mouth was free. "He's been in a lot of student films. I think he was like a child model or something – which will make a lot of sense once you finally get a look at him." She jumped for joy, spilling an ounce of liquid on the grey carpet. "I'm so excited about this. If you guys hit it off, then I we can all go on dates together –"

Shane was confused. "Why would you go on a date with us?"

"Because I'm your chaperone."

Shane looked up at the ceiling.

"And if you guys get married –"

Shane's eyes nearly popped out of his skull.

"Married?"

Rose laughed delightedly and pinched the fat of Shane's cheeks until they were pink.

"I'm picturing a summer wedding," Rose went on. She had to be kidding. "You'll need to take some time off, obviously, to go on your honeymoon."

"Honeymoon?" Shane was feeling dizzy.

"Of course," Rose said, like it was the most natural thing in the world.

Shane shrugged uncomfortably. "I don't think I would want a big wedding."

Rose was aghast. "It's not for *you*, Shane," she clarified. "It's for me. I want my big gay wedding."

"You can have your own gay wedding."

Rose was displeased with that answer.

"It won't be the same."

As usual, Shane let Rose lead the way to the party house, since he had no idea where they were going. In their fall semester, Shane had been invited to plenty of parties, but he would usually turn the invitations down and then Rose would end up dragging him there anyway. Eventually people just stopped asking him and he went wherever Rose did.

It barely took thirty seconds from the time they removed their jackets for Rose to spot Miles from across the room and summon him over for introductions.

"That's him," Rose whispered.

"Yeah I could tell."

"How?"

"He's walking towards us."

Miles was tall and muscular and he was wearing a v-neck. He looked like he could have been a bodybuilder in another life. Rose was right that he really was model-esque. He certainly didn't look like he belonged at a college party. He looked like he should have been at a movie premiere or something.

Shane observed that Miles embraced Rose in a way that felt familiar. They may have been closer than she was letting on.

"Miles," Rose said cheerfully. "This is my friend Shane. He's actually my ex, but you don't need to know that."

Rose had a tendency to overshare when she was nervous.

"Hello Shane," Miles said in a low melodic tone.

Miles was not-so-discretely peering down the length of Shane's body, which felt mildly objectifying but also flattering. Rose wasn't lying when she said that Miles was cute. But Shane wondered if he was almost *too* handsome. Not that Shane thought of himself as ugly by any means, but he'd be lying if he said he wouldn't have felt a little insecure standing next to Miles for long periods of time.

There was also no gruffness about him, which was disappointing. He was completely clean shaven with no visible stubble. Physically, he was a little too perfect. Shane needed someone who could get a bit rough when the time called for it, and Miles just didn't look like that was his thing. And Shane wasn't interested in being with someone that he would have to coach in bed.

Maybe Shane was making too many assumptions. After all, he had only just met him. And it's not like Shane had a wealth of experience in this area. He should give him more time to make an impression before writing him off entirely.

"Hi Miles," Shane said, trying to be polite.

Rose's eyes darted between the two men, perhaps sensing chemistry between them, even though on Shane's end it was non-existent.

"Shane is gay," Rose said out loud.

Jesus.

This was Rose being a wing-woman?

It was a stark contrast from her normal enchanting self. She was usually Rose so charming when it came to these things. There were countless nights that Shane had witnessed her begin the evening with one woman, leave with them, have her way with them, come back to the party and repeat the same process anew. He had watched her casually steal women from their boyfriends. He had even seen her pick up two women at once. She was like a magician. A

sexual magician. Women lost their minds over her. He recalled a jealous duel that broke out over Rose's affection last November, where hair was pulled and nails were broken.

But right now she was making an awkward situation even more awkward.

"So," Miles said flirtatiously. "Shane."

Shane didn't like how he said his name as though he'd known him for a lot longer than he realistically had.

"What do you do Shane?"

This was beginning to feel like a job interview. And even though Shane wasn't eager to fill the position, he felt the inexplicable need to try and impress Miles anyway. Even if it was only to show Rose that he had tried his best to fulfill her big gay wedding dreams.

A woman that Shane recognized from the psychology department freshman mixer at the beginning of the year approached Rose and whispered something in her ear. She had long brunette hair that reached her hips, she was wearing a silver mini dress and had two plastic green antenna poking out of her head. Shane had noticed a couple minutes prior that she had been staring at Rose for a while, working up the nerve to break up their conversation.

Rose asked for permission to make an exit. "Can I leave you two alone?"

Miles met Shane's gaze and gave him a warm smile.

"I think we'll be fine," Miles assured her.

She gave Shane a firm pat on the back. "I'm sure you will. Have fun boys, but not too much fun."

“Thanks Rose,” Shane said sarcastically as she was being pulled in the opposite direction.

Shane relaxed his shoulders and unclenched his jaw. Miles seemed to like him. That meant he was doing a good job of acting normal. Maybe he could go on pretending that his heart hadn't been quietly breaking inside his chest for the past seven days.

The next thing Shane heard was the clatter of a glass bottle hitting the floor and shattering. When he glanced down at his feet there were shards of glass everywhere.

What the fuck is going –

He spotted where the commotion had originated. Two men in the corner of the room were screaming at each other loud enough for the rest of the party to hear.

“Get away from me!”

It looked like a fight was about to break out. One of the men, the bigger of the two, poured a drink on the other man's lap and then threw the cup at his chest.

Should he intervene? Shane wasn't a fighter, but considering recent events, he knew that he was at least capable of it.

“Fuck you,” the bigger man screamed, pushing the smaller man away. The bigger man tried to grab the smaller man's arm. “Get the fuck off me!”

From Shane's vantage point, it looked like they were about to throw down and get into a full-on smack down fight in the middle of the frat house. But then the bigger man stormed off without incident. The smaller man looked around the room, embarrassed, since most of the partygoers were now staring at him. He left shortly after his friend and disappeared into the night.

Everyone was silent for a few seconds after that, but it quickly blew over and everyone went back to their individual conversations.

“That was... intense,” Miles noted.

Shane turned back towards him. “Yeah, what the hell was that?”

“Men being stupid,” Miles offered a suggestion.

“Probably,” Shane half-heartedly agreed. But there was something else that Shane had observed between the two men. A flicker of something. It was... passionate. Shane envied the kind of passion that one must have to throw a drink at someone and storm out of a party.

“Shane?”

He was aware that Miles was talking to him, but he couldn't bring himself to respond. He was beginning to feel claustrophobic. Shane needed to get some air.

“Sorry, I need— I'll be right back.”

He walked straight out the door and into the empty front yard. The cool air was good for his head, but Shane's body wasn't reacting normally. The very act of breathing suddenly felt complicated and onerous, and it took great effort for Shane to take the necessary carbon dioxide into his lungs. He felt like he was drowning without actually being under water.

Breathe, Shane, breathe.

A concerned voice called out from a few feet behind him. “Hey dude, are you okay?”

When Shane turned his head, he saw one of the men who had been involved in the fight a few minutes prior. It was the smaller man who seemed to be the reactive one in the argument. Shane noticed that he wasn't dressed up and was just wearing regular clothes. Maybe he thought that he was too cool for themed parties.

He was standing there alone smoking a joint next to a shrub and witnessing Shane have a panic attack.

Shane waved him off. "I'm just lightheaded."

He got a better look at the man, who was only a couple inches shorter than Shane, and had wavy brown hair. He felt his chest tighten.

"How much have you had to drink?"

Shane laughed hollowly. "Actually, I haven't had anything."

"Well shit."

Shane had completely forgotten his manners. "I'm Shane, by the way."

"Ben," the man said. His name was Ben.

"Hi Ben."

"I can't go back in there," Ben said.

“Why not? I think you could have taken him,” Shane joked.

Ben smiled but it quickly faded. “Oh I definitely could have. My boyfriend’s a fucking idiot,” he said harshly, before offering a minor correction. “Sorry, my *ex*-boyfriend. He’ll probably never speak to me ever again after all that.”

Shane was fascinated by this revelation, while also being a little proud of himself for noticing the sexual tension between them earlier.

“That was your boyfriend?”

“Yeah,” the guy shrugged and took another hit. “Is that okay with you?”

Did he think that Shane was being homophobic? Oh, the irony.

“I’m gay,” Shane said, figuring that it was safe to tell that information to another queer person.

His hypothesis appeared correct when he earned a tiny smile.

“Aren’t you on the hockey team?”

Being recognized from playing hockey wasn’t a regular occurrence for Shane. It made him feel like a campus celebrity.

“Yeah,” Shane admitted. “Is that okay with you?”

The man laughed earnestly. “Yeah, that’s cool. I guess.” They stared at each other. “Actually, that’s a lie. I always thought that hockey players were assholes.”

His unabashed honesty was refreshing.

“Most of them are,” Shane agreed. He was being serious. He didn’t try to make a joke out of it.

Ben pinched the end of the joint with two fingers and placed it in the front pocket of his loose-fitting black shirt. Suddenly Shane’s breath was gone for an entirely different reason.

Why did he have to find smoking so attractive? Most of the time he thought it was gross.

Ben’s lips were moving but no sound reached Shane’s ears.

Did he just say something?

Shane was too busy getting lost in Ben’s dreamy hazel eyes to fully process what he was saying.

"Sorry what?"

Ben laughed at Shane's inability to pay attention. “I said, is that hot guy you were talking to your boyfriend?”

Did he mean Miles? What would give him that idea?

“What – oh, um, nope,” Shane said. “Just a guy I met tonight. My friend is trying to set us up, but I freaked out and now he probably thinks I’m crazy.”

Ben nodded. “That’s his loss, then.”

Were they flirting? Shane couldn't tell. He hadn't had very much practice flirting with men. Or with anyone else, for that matter. In the past, Shane had seemed to inadvertently fall into relationships with women despite lacking attraction to them. He had a feeling that it would be more difficult to fall into a relationship with a man, especially since he wasn't entirely "out" yet.

Shane's stomach was in knots. The tension was so much that it was almost overflowing. All it needed was one match to ignite.

He carefully considered his next move. What if he just walked over to Ben and kissed him? He was a good candidate for a one-night stand. He was a stranger and had no obvious connections to any of Shane's friends. He also disliked hockey players, so he probably wouldn't be interested in dating Shane seriously. He would be easy enough to avoid in the future.

Following his actions through to their logical conclusion, Shane could already imagine ending the night on his knees with the man standing in front of him. And he didn't mind the thought. He actually kind of liked it.

So Shane decided to pour the gasoline and set the fire.

"I'm going back inside," Shane stated his intention abruptly. Then he turned on his heels and started walking back towards the house, before planting his feet on the ground and twisting his head over his shoulder. "Are you coming?"

Ben's eyes widened in surprise. Then he gave Shane a look, as if to say, *are we really doing this?*

Shane quickened his pace and re-entered the party. Wordlessly, Ben followed Shane back inside and up the steep set of old stairs.

What am I doing?

He'd only just met this person. He didn't know anything about him. That was probably for the best. Easier to forget about him, Shane thought.

Ben could be a terrible person. Or a serial killer. Though that was almost impossibly unlikely. He was probably just an okay person with above-average looks.

As his foot touched down on the top step, Shane remembered that he was supposed to be hitting it off with Miles downstairs. Poor Miles. He was probably wondering where Shane had disappeared to. Hopefully he wasn't worried after Shane hyperventilated and then ran away – which was quickly becoming a pattern of his.

Shane pulled Ben inside the bathroom by the back of his shirt, and slammed their bodies against the closed door, locking it behind them.

Was he really going to go through with this?

He needed to act before his brain caught up to what his body was doing. Shane recognized that it was undoubtedly self-destructive to have sex with someone purely out of malice. He shouldn't feel pressured to rush into anything just because his older fuck buddy had made it a condition of their affair that he had to sleep with other men.

On the other hand, if that's what Rozanov really wanted, then two could play at that game. Shane wasn't above giving him a taste of his own medicine. He said he wanted it, after all.

And Ben was cute, and seemed nice, and most importantly he was there right now.

With Ben's back pressed firmly against the door, Shane dropped to his knees and started frantically tugging at the waist of Ben's pants and dragging them down to his feet.

“What are you doing?”

Shane thought it was obvious.

“Blowing you.”

“Oh,” Ben said with the same wide-eyed expression. “Okay. Cool.”

Cool?

Hopefully it was just the drugs talking because that’s not exactly the encouragement Shane wanted to hear as he was gearing up.

Yeah, Shane thought, it’s pretty fucking cool of me to do this, thanks for noticing.

He had done this plenty of times now, but only with one person. It couldn't possibly be *that* different, right?

The first thing he noticed about Ben’s penis was that it wasn’t quite as long as he was used to, which would probably make it easier, if slightly less fun. For Shane, half of the excitement of sex was the challenge of pushing himself to his absolute limits. That wasn’t going to happen here.

He took Ben into his mouth and sucked on the tip for a while before slowly easing him into the back of his throat. Ben whined above him and Shane felt him grow even harder in his mouth, which sent a shiver of satisfaction down Shane’s spine.

He stared up at Ben with precious doe eyes that always seemed to drive his older lover insane.

“Fuck my mouth,” Shane demanded.

Ben seemed to sense that Shane needed it rough, because he grabbed the back of his head and pulled his mouth onto the length of his cock until Shane's eyes watered and he nearly gagged.

This was exactly what he needed to get out of his head.

Shane mindlessly allowed his mouth to be filled with Ben's dick as he slobbered around it like a dog with a bone. He wasn't doing any work except keeping his jaw slack and ignoring the way the back of his throat was burning.

When Ben pulled his hands away, Shane started moving again, using the obscene amount of saliva he had produced to stroke him with both hands. It was something he'd learned to do to give his mouth a break for a few seconds. But Ben seemed close already, so maybe they were nearing the end.

"Wait," Ben stopped him. "Get up. Turn around."

Shane's mind buffered. "Wha – what?"

"You heard me."

Shane promptly stood up and swallowed the spit and pre-cum that had pooled in the inside of his cheeks.

"Put your hands on the sink."

Shane did as he was told. As his hands slammed on the sink counter, Ben placed his right leg between Shane's thighs, prying them apart. He looked up to see his own face in the mirror.

Holy shit. He looked like a feral animal. Rabid. He was visibly sweating.

He felt his jeans being tugged down to his knees.

Did Ben seriously think that they were going to have sex for the first time in a bathroom, at a frat party? No fucking way.

Except... Maybe he could be persuaded under the right circumstances.

No, that would be a terrible idea.

Right?

There was probably a line of people forming outside. Someone would be banging on the door in a matter of seconds.

Shane couldn't really blame him for thinking that he would be down though, considering he did drag him up here and start sucking his dick within approximately five minutes of knowing each other. And after ditching his actual date downstairs.

"Here?" Shane shook his head vehemently.

Ben clearly wasn't listening.

"Hey," Shane said, more aggressively this time. "I'm talking to you."

Ben ravished Shane's neck.

"Relax," he said as Shane melted into his kisses.

Then Ben started fingering him. It felt... okay, but not great. It didn't seem like he was doing it for the purpose of actually making him feel good. It was more like it was just a prerequisite to getting inside of Shane faster.

"Please," Ben whispered. "Let me fuck you."

Shane couldn't deny that he was physically turned on right now. And in his mind, he had come this far, so he thought that he might as well just let it happen.

"Yes," Shane mumbled. "Hurry."

He watched in horror as Ben spit in his right hand and then a second later, he felt the wet sensation against his hole. He already knew that it wasn't going to be anywhere close to enough lubrication.

He was proven right immediately when Ben thrust into him. He pulled almost all the way out and then rammed back inside, not stopping to check with Shane about the pace or the pressure.

"That hurts," Shane whisper-shouted.

"I think you can handle it."

Shane's heart beat faster. *That isn't the fucking point.*

"Fuck," Shane said involuntarily when the right spot was hit. Ben seemed to be doing it inadvertently, but it still worked like a charm. At this angle, he was so deep that Shane could swear that he could feel him all the way in his abdomen.

The rhythm was ruthless, pounding into him over and over again, mercilessly. Shane hoped that the music coming from downstairs had drowned out the sound of skin slapping against skin.

He counted a total of thirty-one thrusts before he came without being touched. He didn't make any noise when it happened. He just kept it to himself and let Ben continue using him for his own orgasm.

Ben held Shane's hips in place as Shane started to twist from overstimulation.

"Where are you going?"

Shane didn't respond.

"What, you don't want to talk to me anymore?"

Shane rolled his eyes at that, considering that he didn't seem to be listening to him when he tried to say something earlier.

"Oh fuck, Shane."

Shane was pushing back against him now, meeting his thrusts half-way, trying desperately to push him over the edge.

"Don't come inside me," Shane told him.

"Why not," he complained.

He wasn't going to justify his decision. He shouldn't have to.

“Just don’t.”

Shane was glad he said something because soon after, Ben’s breath hitched and then he swiftly pulled out and Shane watched as he came into a dirty hand towel. *Gross.*

The pain lingered even when there was nothing inside him anymore.

As soon as Ben was done and the pleasure appeared to have subsided, Shane pushed him away as hard as he could.

Ben stumbled backwards, chuckled and ran his hands through his messy hair.

“You’re fun,” he said jovially.

Shane just stared at him while his brain slowly came back online. “That fucking hurt,” he snarled.

Ben shrugged. “I thought that’s what you wanted,” he said coldly. He looked down at the small come stain on Shane’s boxers.

It *was* what Shane wanted. But he still couldn’t stand to look at his smug face any longer.

He quickly got dressed and reached for the doorknob. He flicked open the lock.

“Don’t follow me,” he said as he left.

Shane shut the door behind him and prayed that no one at the party heard them fucking for the past seven minutes.

He went back downstairs and re-joined the party like nothing happened.

Chapter End Notes

i promise shane will be happy soon, i also hate seeing my baby miserable :(

if you are enjoying this story please let me know in the comments because it really does motivate me to write more 

and as always, like and subscribe for more

Chapter 14: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

this story has nearly reached 300 subscribers 🎉 that's super cool and i hope you guys are enjoying it! i read all your comments and love them all <3

this is another sad shane chapter so i apologize in advance but i promise it will get better from here

also the same warning from the last chapter follows into this one, please take care of yourselves ❤️

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

Shane had tried everything to scrub what happened in that bathroom out of his brain for good.

A part of him cursed that night and the way that Ben had treated him like he was nothing. But there was another, more insistent, part of him that needed it to happen again, but this time, on his terms.

He needed it to be rough and he needed to be taken out of his head.

As fate would have it, the next time he ventured out of his dorm, he happened to stumble upon Ben at another party. It appeared that the breakup had stuck because he was there alone, standing in the corner like a weirdo, just staring at Shane and sipping his beer until Shane decided that enough was enough and invited him back to his room.

He realized that there was no point in fighting his attraction to him and that he might as well give into it for now, even though there was no way that it could last. Even though he was a complete asshole and kind of sleazy, Ben also seemed very capable of anticipating what Shane needed and had no qualms about giving it to him.

It had only been four days, but they had settled into a fairly robust sexual routine. Each night, around eleven, Ben would text his intention to swing by Shane's dorm, and Shane would either reply with a thumbs up or a thumbs down depending on his mood.

When the answer was yes, which it almost always was, he would let Ben take him however he wanted until Shane was a weeping, blubbing mess, clinging to the bedsheets for some small semblance of comfort. He would ask him to wear a condom, he would tell him to pull out, and sometimes he would comply and other times he wouldn't.

The unrestrained aggression while fucking was the only way that Shane could manage to suppress his overactive brain. He let his raging hormones drown out the screaming in his gut that was telling him this was wrong, that Ben wasn't the person he wanted, that he was just using him to fill a void.

Say something. Tell him to stop. Say anything to make it stop.

Tell him that you're in love with someone who isn't him. Tell him that this wouldn't be right.

It's the truth, isn't it?

"Get on top of me," Ben demanded through sharp breaths. "I want to watch you ride me."

Shane ached as Ben pulled out. They switched places efficiently, trying to waste as little time as possible. At this rate he was already going to be late for his early morning practice, which would be a horrible look considering the sum of his erratic behaviour lately.

He lowered himself onto Ben's cock, quicker than he should have or was prepared for. He stayed still for a few seconds as he adjusted to the new sensation. Once he'd settled in, he started bouncing back down over and over and over, getting into a beautiful rhythm that appeared to be working well for both of them.

"There you go, baby. That's it. Just like that."

Shane didn't relish in the praise. He didn't receive any pleasure from being told how good he was. Right now, he wanted the opposite.

Ben slapped Shane's ass, hard, and Shane whimpered.

"You like that, baby?"

He thumbed the small crevice between Shane's thigh and hip. Shane hated when Ben did things like that. Touching him gently, softly, like he had any right to treat him with respect. That's not what Shane wanted. That's not why he was here and Ben knew that.

"No," Shane replied whinily. "Not your baby. Not *your* anything."

"You're right," Ben grunted. "You're a greedy slut."

His callous words reached his ears and unravelled something deep inside of Shane.

"Tell me again," Shane encouraged.

"What," he feigned confusion. "That you're a greedy slut?"

Shane moaned at the insult. "Yes. Tell me."

He leaned down to kiss him. "You're a fucking slut," Ben growled as he went faster, breathing hot air into Shane's open mouth. "Look at you, taking my dick so well. You must do this a lot. You've probably had a lot of men inside you, huh?"

“No,” Shane protested.

“No? So you’re only *my* greedy little slut?”

Shane shook his head.

“Come here.”

Ben awkwardly man-handled Shane until he was on his back, and then stuck himself back inside and began thrusting harder.

“That’s it,” he said. “Take my cock.”

“I hate you,” Shane quipped.

Ben wrapped his fingers around Shane’s cock and started jerking. “It doesn’t feel like you hate me.”

Shane wasn’t going to let that wisecrack slide.

“I do,” he confirmed. “I fucking hate you.”

He pressed down on Shane’s slit and Shane’s head slammed back against the pillow.

Ben smiled sickeningly. “You’re such a liar.”

“Say it again.”

“You’re a filthy liar.”

“Tell me I’m disgusting.”

Ben never flinched when Shane made one of these odd requests. He never made Shane feel weird about wanting to be treated badly.

“You’re disgusting,” Ben repeated, exactly as Shane instructed him.

“Tell me I’m a bad person.”

“You’re the worst,” Ben said, using his own editorial flair.

“Tell me you hate me.”

These vicious statements were all things that had been rattling around in Shane’s head for the past week. But hearing the words come from someone else’s mouth seemed to help quiet the cruel voice in his head that was constantly telling him everything that was wrong with him on a never-ending loop.

“I hate you,” Ben repeated. “You’re so fucking gross, I can’t stand you.” He pushed down on the right side of Shane’s face, forcing him to look at the wall. “You don’t even deserve to look at me while I fill you with my come.”

Shane’s phone was loudly buzzing and jumping on the side table, begging to be answered.

Ben glanced over at it with curiosity.

“Is your boyfriend wondering where you are?”

Since Rose had introduced them, Shane and Miles had gone out a couple times, mostly in groups. It was nothing serious and there was still no spark between them.

Last night they’d gone on a date before Shane retired to his own dorm.

Or at least Shane thought it was a date, since it ended with him under Miles’ bedsheets half-naked. Shane had begrudgingly jerked him off, once, and refused to let him reciprocate. It was awkward and felt strange and he wasn’t interested in seeing him again, either in a romantic sense or for any other reason. He wasn’t sure how he was going to break the news to Rose, so he’d been avoiding her and was keeping their texts to simple one-word responses so that he didn’t have to tell her the truth.

Until last night, Shane had never actually been taken out on a date before. One where you sat down together and ate dinner and made polite conversation about your life and tried to impress the other person so that they would want to see you again. He had taken Rose on dates in the brief time that they were together, but they never felt formal or intimidating. He never felt uneasy around her or like she was judging him.

Maybe that’s part of what he liked about his arrangement with Ben. He didn’t have to pretend to be anything other than what he was. He was neurotic and competitive and horny and sometimes he needed to be told that he was a horrible person in bed in order to get off.

Shane corrected him. “Not my boyfriend.”

“Does he know how much you like my cock? How much you always beg for it.”

“He’s not my boyfrie— end.” Shane choked on his retort.

“Nah, he’s too nice for you right? That’s what you said. You don’t want to fuck someone nice,” Ben accurately recapped what Shane had told him. “You want me to fuck you like the

dirty slut that you are.”

He had a crude grin smeared across the lower half of his face. Always so proud of himself for absolutely no reason. It drove Shane mad with hatred and desire, two concepts that were more closely intertwined than he had ever understood before.

There was something bizarrely liberating about sleeping with someone you couldn’t stand to be around while fully-clothed. Shane didn’t have to care about looking his best or making weird noises or taking too long to finish or finishing too early. He could chase his orgasm selfishly and without remorse.

Being with Ben meant that he could be honest about what he wanted because there was no fear of being rejected. If Ben stopped wanting to fuck him, it didn’t really change Shane’s life all that much. It would be disappointing, but not heartbreaking. It wouldn’t hurt his feelings. He could move on easily.

He wished he had known about the option of hate-fucking sooner. Why did no one ever talk about this?

Maybe because it was a terrible idea that was destined to backfire.

“Harder,” Shane demanded. “I want to feel you all day. All week. All fucking year.”

Shane had unknowingly slipped into the private sanctuary deep in his subconscious that he went sometimes during sex when the pleasure became too much to bear. His mind was blissfully empty. He was always so grateful to Ben for giving him that peace that was impossible to gain on his own.

When he finally came to his senses, Ben was still on top of him, thrusting slower and looking mildly concerned. So concerned, apparently, that he broke character for the first time.

“Are you okay,” Ben asked, genuinely checking in. “You disappeared again.”

“Yeah, it just felt really good,” Shane admitted, embarrassingly.

“It freaks me out when you do that.”

He pulled out and wiped his excess semen across Shane’s belly, creating a pattern that resembled an abstract expressionist painting.

Shane’s nose crinkled when he saw the mess. Then he berated him. “Asshole, you came inside me?”

Ben justified it with lame excuses like he always did. “I couldn’t help it, you felt so good.”

“That was awful,” Shane said, stifling a smile. “I hated that so much.”

“I know baby,” Ben cooed, pushing the hair out of Shane’s face so he could see him better. “You keep telling yourself that.”

Shane crossed his arms. “Don’t call me that,” he said seriously. Shane hated when Ben continued to speak to him condescendingly after the sex was over.

“Yeah yeah, I know the rules. I can only call you names before you come.”

Shane shook his head and sharply exhaled.

“Get me a towel,” Shane demanded, quickly growing tired of the stickiness that was clinging to his skin.

Ben disappeared into the bathroom and came back with a small white towel for Shane to clean himself with. When Shane was done, he threw it across the room into the hamper.

“I have practice,” Shane said distractedly as he unfolded his pants and pulled them back on, one leg at a time.

He really wished that he had enough time to take a shower and wash off the stench of shame that was surely emanating from him.

Ben ran his fingers down Shane’s back, which tickled. Shane lurched forward to escape his touch.

“Will you come by after?”

Shane shrugged and then gave him nothing.

“Probably not,” he offered.

Ben sat up and crossed his legs. “Are you going to call me,” he asked in a put-on casual tone that did not succeed in masking his underlying desperation. “Or do I just have to wait until you show up at another party.”

“Not sure,” Shane said, putting his phone in his pants pocket and silently searching for where he dropped his keys.

“Have you seen my –”

He spotted the keys in Ben’s hand. He must've stolen them off his dresser. Shane reached over the bed to take them back but Ben pulled them further away.

“Are you going to call me?”

Shane huffed. Why did he always have to be so difficult?

“Cut it out, I’m already late.”

He threw him the keys, harder than he strictly needed to, and Shane expertly caught them in his right hand.

“I’ll see you around,” Shane said, trying to seem as non-committal as possible.

“Yes you will,” Ben said. He waved and blew him a cheeky air kiss that Shane barely noticed before he was half-way out the door with his gym bag and and sprinting to the athletics building.

He overestimated how fast he was. It took at least fifteen minutes to make his way to practice after the storm last night had left a foot of snow on the ground.

Shane slinked his workout bag over the bench, threw off his boots, removed his heavy coat, and quickly got changed into his practice jersey. All his team members were already on the ice doing warm ups. As Captain, Shane should have been there early. He should have beat everyone else there. He should’ve been leading by example. But instead he was too busy getting railed by a dumb sophomore with perfect hazel eyes and a remarkable understanding of human anatomy.

It was worth it though. Shane had seen stars and he was still walking with a slight limp.

By the time he finally made it to the rink, most of the guys were still stretching. Really, it was everyone except Troy and Dallas, who were taking shots on an empty net.

Troy glanced over at Shane with a blank expression on his face. *What was his problem?*

"Looking good everyone," Shane said, trying to integrate himself and act like he hadn't been extremely late.

Hayden did a double-take as Shane entered the ice. "Hey man, where have you been?"

Shane ignored the question. "Is Coach freaking out?"

"Isn't he always?"

Then, as if they had magically summoned him, Coach Theriault shouted angrily in their direction.

"Hollander! Get over here."

He was standing slightly off the ice, hidden behind the boards and staring daggers at Shane.

Oh great.

He addressed the rest of the players next. "Everyone else, keep practising. Lord knows you need it."

Dallas sneered at Shane before getting his obligatory jab in.

"Nice of you to show up, Captain."

Shane mentally flipped him the bird as he skated to the edge and exited the ice. Theriault looked absolutely pissed. He was leaning on his right arm and strangling a clipboard in his left hand.

“Hey coach,” Shane said, sounding chipper. He was trying to appear normal, but he ended up sounding like a dick who didn’t care about the fact that he showed up late.

Theriault was stunned by the disrespect. Shane wasn’t sure what was coming next but whatever it was, it couldn’t be good for him.

“What’s going on with you, Hollander?” Shane stood there and took the beating. "Showing up late for practice, punching the shit out of your teammates... What happened to you? This is not the man that I met last spring."

He paused before continuing. "This is not the man that I chose to lead this team."

What was Shane supposed to say to that? He couldn’t tell him the truth. Hell, he didn’t even know what the truth was at this point. That he had fallen into a depression, spiraled out of control, sought validation in all the wrong places, and almost skipped a mandatory team practice because he was too busy being verbally demeaned during rough sex.

And if that wasn’t bad enough, the root of all this suffering was that he was trying to move on after sleeping with a married man, who also happened to teach at the university.

Shane knew that he was sabotaging his chances of success, but he couldn’t seem to stop.

“I’m sorry,” Shane offered feebly. “It won’t happen again, I promise.”

Theriault pursed his lips and Shane noticed that the angriest, most prominent vein in his neck was getting redder and more irritated the more Shane opened his mouth. He clicked his pen a

few times in frustration.

“You know the rules,” he reiterated. “If you don’t show up to practice you don’t play.”

Any rational thought momentarily left Shane’s body. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“I was ten minutes late.” Shane pleaded for leniency. “Come on, you know I’ve never been late to practice before. I just overslept. Can’t you cut me some slack just this one time?”

The momentary expression on Theriault’s face gave Shane a flicker of hope.

“I don’t know,” he said, scratching his forehead just underneath his hairline. “I can’t make exceptions for you, Hollander.”

No of course not, Shane thought. *Only for Dallas.*

"What would everyone else think if I gave you special treatment," Theriault asked.

It took every bit of Shane's self-restraint not to go ballistic. He had never received any special treatment since the day he started playing hockey. He had been the subject of racist taunts, homophobic remarks, and now, his coach was implying that he was asking to be given more leeway than everyone else. That couldn't have been further from reality. He just wanted to feel like an equal, contributing member of this team. He deserved as much, considering how he single-handedly carried them to the playoffs this year.

"What about Dallas," Shane asked. "Does this apply to him too, or is it just me?"

That was definitely the wrong thing to say if he was hoping for any chance of playing in the game later that day.

“No one is making exceptions for Dallas.”

“That’s bullshit!”

Theriault peered over at the rest of the team, many of whom had turned their heads to observe their heated conversation.

“Mind your own business,” he yelled at them. “This doesn’t concern you.”

Everyone dispersed, skating in opposite directions.

“You’re seriously going to bench me,” Shane asked, outraged. “I’m the best player here.”

His cocky attitude probably wasn’t helping his case.

“Exactly,” Theriault agreed. “I expect better from you.”

“So I’m being punished for being a good player? That doesn’t even make any sense.”

What happened to not being able to handle losing him for even one game? He was the only goal scorer when they played last time. They needed him if they wanted to have any chance of winning.

“No, you’re getting benched because you’re not a *team* player. You only care about yourself. How Shane's feeling. You need to grow up.”

Not a team player? Why, because he didn't want to have to deal with homophobic slurs during a game or because he didn't want to share the ice with a rapist?

Did being a "team player" mean that he was supposed to excuse every shitty thing that his teammates did, up to and including sexual assault? Because if that's what was expected of him, then he didn't want to be captain anymore.

Shane tried to calm down and act rationally.

"I know I've been weird lately, but I'll be better," Shane promised. "Give me another chance and I promise I won't disappoint you again."

Shane's pleas were futile.

"Go home," Theriault told him sternly. "We'll talk about this tomorrow."

Then he walked right past Shane and went to talk to the rest of the team, no doubt to tell them that Shane was benched for tonight. Shane took one last look at everyone before storming back into the locker room.

Shane was fuming. He saw red. This wasn't fair. None of this was fucking fair. He felt like the universe was conspiring against him to make him miserable. To take everything he cared about away from him. He didn't even enjoy playing hockey anymore. Not with this team, these people.

So Shane, despite being a grown man who should have had better judgment, chose to throw a temper tantrum. He kicked the bench and threw his skates at the wall. He hit his stick into the floor so many times and with so much force that it broke in half. He spit in Dallas's water bottle. He screamed bloody murder, hoping that everyone in the building would hear him.

The anger he had kept inside all this time was starting to scare him. This wasn't normal.

“Fuck you,” he screamed. “Fuck all of you.”

What he meant was, *why can't I stop fucking things up?*

After he was done, he looked around and totalled the damage. His broken stick, the marks on the wall, the mess that he had left in his wake. This pathetic display of bravado had accomplished nothing.

Though he did have to admit that spitting in Dallas's water bottle did slightly improve his mood.

He stuffed his broken stick into his bag, along with the rest of his shit, and got the hell out of there as fast as humanly possible. As he walked away, he decided to take the day to get his head screwed back on straight.

Before he could have the opportunity to make any more rash decisions, Shane chose to grab a hearty lunch. He hadn't eaten anything since yesterday, and maybe having a full stomach would take away some of his edge.

While he was standing in line, he caught sight of Rose sitting at a table alone. She was typing vigorously on her laptop. She had her AirPods in her ears and was tuning out the world.

His stomach dropped into his feet. It was far from his typical reaction to seeing his best friend.

He couldn't seem to outrun his problems lately.

She had always been his favourite person, the person he trusted most to offer sage advice or pick him up when he was down. The person who comforted him when he thought he'd fucked up beyond repair. But today he could barely stand to look at her. He had dug a hole for himself that felt impossible to crawl out of. He didn't even know if it would be worth it to crawl out or if he should just stay there forever.

Within thirty seconds, Rose was standing in front of him with her arms crossed and a small wrinkle in her forehead.

"Were you just going to ignore me?"

She seemed confused, but her confusion was mixed with genuine hurt. Shane figured that was to be expected after how long he'd been ignoring her. Even a day without seeing Rose made him sad. Maybe it was the same way for her.

"I didn't see you," Shane lied, unconvincingly.

Rose wasn't buying it. "I waved at you, stupid."

"Sorry," he said. "I've been kind of out of it these past couple of days."

Shane swayed on his feet and stared off into space.

Rose signalled her understanding with a small nod.

"Yeah, I've noticed," she confirmed. "What's going on? Shane, you don't look okay."

As soon as she said that, Shane felt a thick lump forming in his throat. *Fuck*. He didn't want to cry in public like a child.

Rose placed a comforting hand on his forearm. “Look, don’t let that asshole Dallas get to you,” she said forcefully. “You’re the best fucking player on that team and everyone knows it. He’s just an insecure man baby. Someone had to put him in his place.”

Tears welled in Shane’s eyelids.

“Hey,” Rose said to get his attention. “What’s wrong?”

It must have been written all over his face.

“Did Miles tell you?”

His voice was weak and unsteady. Shane wasn’t sure if Miles had already told Rose about the other night. He needed to know the extent of her knowledge before deciding if he wanted to talk about it or not.

“He didn’t tell me anything,” Rose said, studying Shane’s unhappy expression. “Did something happen between you and Miles?”

Shane nodded, barely.

“Well that’s great,” Rose said, with a slight apprehension in her voice. She didn’t have the usual excitement that she did when Shane divulged the intimate details of his life with her.

“That’s great, right?” She squeezed his arm. “Shane? Please talk to me. You’re kinda freaking me out right now.”

Shane hung his head and sighed. He felt so embarrassed.

“Come sit down with me,” Rose said, taking him by the hand and leading him to an empty table at the back of the cafe with all of Rose’s school stuff spread out haphazardly across the surface.

She plunked him down in a chair and sat down across from him.

“Talk,” she demanded as soon as they’d sat down.

“I’m such an idiot,” Shane said. He put his head in his hands and started rocking back and forth because the motion sometimes made him feel better.

“Shane, you need to tell me what happened.” Rose sounded alarmed. “The full story, from the beginning.”

Mentally Shane kept beating himself down. He was so angry at his choices and at his stupid unstable emotions. Why couldn’t he just control them like everyone else seemed to be able to? What was his fucking problem?

“I thought it would be fine,” Shane explained in vague terms. “I thought I wanted to, but I didn’t. I didn’t like it, Rose. I fucking hated every second of it. And now I feel bad. I feel like I’m dying. I don’t want to have to see him ever again.”

He didn’t know whether he was talking about Miles or Ben or both.

“It’s okay,” Rose said. “Calm down. It’s just a hook up. No big deal, okay? I’m sure Miles hasn’t started planning your wedding yet or anything.”

Rose’s suggestion was so absurd that it made Shane laugh a little.

Her face relaxed. “Spring break is next week,” Rose reminded him. “You’ll take a week off and when you come back, Miles probably won’t even remember what happened between

you. Okay? It's all going to be fine, don't worry about it so much."

"No, Rose I really fucked up," Shane said.

"You didn't," Rose said. "There's nothing that can't be fixed."

She made it sound so simple.

She didn't even know about everything with Ben or about being kicked out of tonight's game.

"I've been sleeping with this guy..."

"Yeah, I know," Rose said.

"No, it's not the person you're thinking. It's someone else."

Rose lifted her eyebrows. "Oh okay," she said neutrally. "Can I ask who?"

Shane's stomach twisted. "You remember those guys last Friday night who were fighting?"

Rose took a second to think about it before the lightbulb went off. "Yeah, I think I remember that."

"Well, I sort of had sex with one of them," Shane admitted. "The cute one," he clarified. "With the good hair."

Rose's eyes got even wider. "Okay," she said, looking confused. "Good for you. Why is that a problem?"

It was hard for Shane to articulate why this was a problem. On the surface, it shouldn't have been an issue. But he knew that something about it wasn't healthy. He was using sex with Ben to punish himself.

"I don't - I guess it's not," Shane said.

"You're going through a lot right now," Rose said clearly. "But you don't have to feel guilty for having sex with multiple guys. There's nothing wrong with you. It's actually a pretty normal thing that a lot of people in college do." She smiled. "In case you haven't noticed."

Why couldn't he be more like Rose? She found it so easy to compartmentalize her feelings.

Shane knew that there was a biological difference between sex and love, but practically, there wasn't such a clear distinction. Every time Shane had sex with Rozanov, he had convinced himself that he was in love with him. He thought that maybe he had only gotten so attached because it was his first time with a man. Maybe Rozanov was just really amazing in bed, and the great sex had tricked his brain into releasing chemicals that made him think he was in love. At least he hoped that that was all it was.

Logically, Shane understood that he wasn't the first student that Rozanov had taken a special interest in. From his perspective, Shane was just another in a long list of empty conquests. But for Shane, it was different. He couldn't wrap his mind around how something could feel this right and still mean nothing. How was he supposed to find the exact same feeling with someone else? Would it ever be *this* good again?

It had to be a bigger deal than Rozanov was letting on. Otherwise, why did it take so much effort to try and pretend that it wasn't? Why did Shane need to prove that he could hook up with another guy?

Rozanov was the first man - first person - that Shane had ever truly *wanted*.

He may have found other men handsome and charming and he had even been attracted to some of them. But he had never been consumed with lust for someone like he was with Rozanov. He didn't want to give that up yet.

The knowledge that he wasn't desired back in the same way was devastating. It made him feel worthless. And that feeling had driven him into the arms of another man. A man who treated him like garbage, because that's how Shane felt that he deserved to be treated. He only allowed himself to be treated that way because deep down, he craved it.

He couldn't demand respect from some of his teammates, he couldn't control his anger on the ice, and he couldn't stop himself from crawling back to Rozanov even though he was clearly unwanted.

He was a terrible Captain, an even worse friend, an average student, and endlessly obsessed with a man whose life circumstances had ensured he could never truly be with.

Shane had never felt more alone.

Chapter End Notes

like and subscribe for more

Chapter 15: Rose

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

surprise rose pov!!!

the next three chapters are basically a trilogy but from different POVs (Rose first, then Shane and then Ilya). they're going to be pretty short chapters but also full of fluff and cuteness in the latter two chapters.

this one is more of a bridge chapter. the arc is moving towards happiness for Shane, because he's been miserable long enough. there will still be more angst moving forward but it won't be as bad lol. there's still a ton of story left!!!

thank you for sticking around to read and for commenting <3 i appreciate it so much

i'm going to take a few days to finish the next two chapters but i will likely post them at once. i am hyper fixated on this story and i love writing it so we'll see I guess lol

***warning for mentions of sexual assault

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

Rose woke up in a messy undone bed that wasn't her own, next to a beautiful red-haired woman named Aubrey.

Or was it Audrey?

It didn't matter.

Rose's head was throbbing. She needed Advil. She needed to find her underwear and the skirt she was wearing last night. Or was it a dress?

Her phone was face-down on the nightstand. She skillfully retrieved it and lifted the bright screen to her face.

The time flashed in white text against the dark background: **07:36**

She had slept through her alarm for the whopping third time this week. *Way to go, Rose.* She needed to get showered and dressed and fly across campus to her costuming class.

She briefly considered leaving a note on the nightstand. But maybe that would give Aubrey (Avery?) the wrong idea. The kind of idea that made her believe that last night meant much more to Rose than it actually did.

She decided against leaving a note. If Avery wanted to find her, Rose would be around.

Her class finished around 11 o'clock and Rose went to a cafe to get some work done. She knew that if she went back to her room she would procrastinate scrolling TikTok on her phone and then take a three hour nap until dinner time.

Normally she would meet up with Shane and they would go somewhere to hang out for a few hours until her next class, but he wasn't texting her back. She hadn't seen her best friend all day and it was beginning to worry her. They had never gone this long without speaking before. Come to think of it, they'd never had an actual fight before.

Were they fighting? Rose hoped not. Conflict made her skin break out in hives.

She had texted him the previous night asking how his date with Miles went, but he never responded. Optimistically, she had wished that it was because he was too busy having fun, but knowing Shane, that probably wasn't the case.

She spent the first ten minutes at the cafe just staring at her phone and feeling sorry for herself. Her eyes burned into the screen, trying to get those three little dots to show up on

Shane's side of the messages, but they never did.

The last thing she had texted him was "hey" with three exclamation points. *Why is he ignoring me?* She scoured her mind for anything she might have done to earn his silence, and came up empty. She had been such a good friend lately. She even set him up on a date with one of her cute actor friends. Sure she could be self-centred sometimes, but that quality had never bothered Shane in the past. Did she talk about herself too much? Was he sick of her already?

Then it hit her. He must have been mad at her for ditching him that night at the party. That's why he disappeared without saying a word. But how could he blame her when she thought that him and Miles were hitting it off? She was trying to give them alone time. And clearly she was a good matchmaker because now they were going on dates... without her.

Rose was feeling left out. How could she seriously be jealous of two gay men going on a date by themselves? Why did it bother her so much? She's the one that set them up in the first place. She should be happy for them. But at that moment she felt like Miles had stolen Shane's attention away from her.

Rose put in her AirPods in her ears and pressed play on her study playlist. She had to finish an assignment in her Introduction to Sociology class that she had neglected to start until a few days before it was due.

As she was pounding away at the keyboard, totally in the zone, she was shaken out of her concentration by an eerie feeling. When she glanced up from her laptop screen, she saw Shane at the front of the cafe, standing in line by himself. She waved at him to get his attention but he didn't seem to notice.

Didn't Shane have practice this morning, Rose wondered. Or was that just another excuse to avoid her.

Her knee bounced underneath the table.

Fuck this, Rose thought as she zoomed across the room to confront him. She wouldn't let this lack of communication stand.

She got right in his face, but he still acted as if she didn't exist. He looked so weird. Like he was sleepwalking. It didn't seem like he was intentionally being evasive, he just wasn't firing on all cylinders.

"Were you just going to ignore me," Rose asked.

"I didn't see you," Shane said absentmindedly. His eyes were glazed. Rose wasn't sure whether he was telling the truth.

"I waved at you, stupid."

"Sorry, I've been kind of out of it these past couple of days."

"Yeah, I've noticed," she said. "What's going on? Shane, you don't look okay."

Was this about what happened with Dallas? Would Shane really still be hung up on that? It was more than a week ago.

"Look, don't let that asshole Dallas get to you. You're the best fucking player on that team and everyone knows it. He's just an insecure man baby. Someone had to put him in his place."

Shane stared down at the floor. She was making his mood worse.

"What's wrong?" Rose tried her best to be comforting.

“Did Miles tell you?”

Miles? She hadn’t talked to Miles since yesterday when he’d asked her for advice on what to wear on their date.

Shane seemed consumed by something. There was a heaviness that was following him around campus like a storm cloud.

The expression written on Shane’s face made Rose’s stomach flip over with dread. She recognized this look. It was the same one that he used to get immediately after they had sex. Sadness mixed with shame. She remembered how he would always slink into himself when he realized that they were really naked and that it wasn’t all a dream.

Back then, she’d assumed he was just some kind of puritan. It wasn’t until he told her he was gay that it all made sense.

“He didn’t tell me anything,” Rose said, studying Shane’s grimace. “Did something happen between you and Miles?”

Shane gave a soft nod.

“Well that’s great,” Rose said, trying to sound happy for him. When Shane didn’t react, Rose got nervous and asked again. “That’s great, right?”

He couldn’t even look her in the eyes. This wasn’t good.

She had only known Shane for a little over six months, but he understood her more intimately than most of the people she had grown up around. He was the first person she came out to. The person who helped her realize that she was queer. She owed a lot to him.

Now he was in trouble and she felt a sense of responsibility to help in any way that she could.

She dragged his limp body back to her table and forced him to spill his guts. He needed to tell what was really going on and stop forcing her to fill in the blanks with worst case scenarios.

The more he poured his heart out, the clearer it became that Shane's self-imposed exile from their friendship had nothing to do with her. This was bigger than her. Shane wasn't okay. Not by a longshot.

When he told her about what really happened that night at the party, suddenly the last few weeks of their lives started to come into focus.

"You don't have to feel guilty for having sex with multiple guys," Rose told him. "It's actually a pretty normal thing that a lot of people in college do."

"It's not that," Shane said, a tear breaking loose from his right eye. "It's just..."

"Just what? Shane. I want to help," she begged. "Please, let me help you."

"I'm just confused," Shane confessed.

"About this guy," she asked. "That rando from the party?"

"Yes," Shane confirmed.

"What about him?"

Shane swallowed his swollen bottom lip.

"What happened there," Rose asked, running her thumb over the outside of Shane's mouth. She noticed the red stripe down the centre. Was it a bite mark?

Shane winced and Rose pulled her hand away.

"What happened to your lip?"

"It's nothing," Shane said, deflecting. But Rose wouldn't let him change the subject.

"Did he do that?"

"I don't... I don't even know. I must not have felt it."

Shane's eyes were wet.

"I'm so confused about everything," Shane said with a noticeable tremor in his voice. "I don't know how to feel."

As soon as she heard those words, Rose switched into counsellor mode. She had heard those words many times before. The confusion and self-blame. The way he couldn't seem to articulate what he wanted to say because he hadn't even processed it himself.

Every Tuesday evening for the past month-and-a-half, Rose had been volunteering at a sexual assault crisis hotline on campus. She didn't tell anyone about it because she wasn't doing it to make herself look like a good person. She just wanted to help people. She never wanted another woman to feel powerless or alone.

The incident with Dallas last semester had shaken Rose more than she wanted to let on. She couldn't stop thinking about how close he was to hurting that woman. And she couldn't help but fixate on how many women came before and after her.

The image of his dark eyes was seared into her brain, haunting her. The way he didn't even seem to realize that what he was doing was wrong. The way he gripped that woman's arm so tightly that she was left with bruises. The way he had her in his clutches and was bringing her back to his sleazy lair like she was his dinner. He was a monster. A vile, hideous swamp creature who should have been behind bars instead of winning championships by riding Shane's coattails.

What was scarier, was that she was the only one who intervened. No one else at the party stepped up to help. She was a short, one-hundred-and-twenty-pound freshman girl. He was bigger and stronger than her. There were men at that party who could have - should have - done something. Shane was the only one who even tried to back her up.

Shane quietly tucked his face into his hands and started rocking back and forth.

"Shane," Rose said, anger rising in her belly. "Did that boy hurt you?"

He shook his head, still not looking at her. "Only because I wanted him to."

The pocket of rage inside of Rose burst. The image of Dallas's smug face ran across her field of vision.

"That's not an answer... Shane?"

"He asked me if he could," Shane admitted. "I said yes."

"Just because you said yes doesn't mean that it was okay," Rose gently explained. "Sometimes people say yes to things because they don't feel like they can say no. He should have made sure that you were okay. He's an asshole."

“No,” Shane said adamantly. “I said yes. I wanted it. I went back and let him do it to me again.”

Oh, poor Shane.

Rose’s heart broke for her friend. He didn’t realize how common those feelings were. How normal it was to go back to someone who hurt you because it gave you some semblance of control. Because it was easier than confronting the fact that something happened that you didn’t entirely want to happen. Because no one wants to feel powerless, so it’s easier to blame yourself because then at least you can pretend that you had a real choice.

He was shutting down.

“Come on,” she said, taking charge of the situation. “I’m taking you home.”

She walked Shane back to his dorm, tucked him under the covers, took off his socks and turned out the light. Then she headed straight for the Arts building to have an urgent chat with Professor Rozanov.

Rose scuttled to the Arts building and got lost for a solid fifteen minutes navigating the labyrinth of classrooms. She finally stopped and got directions from an attractive blond woman (Carrie?) who was heading home from the library, and after wasting another five minutes flirting, Rose ultimately managed to find her way to the third floor where the professors kept their offices. She wondered what poor excuse for an architect designed this building. The offices were very well-hidden and would have been practically impossible to find unless you knew how to get there.

She walked past a number of doors before she found the right one: *Dr. Kya Seewell, Dr. Amelia Langdon, Dr. Jason Liu.*

Finally she saw it: *Dr. Ilya Rozanov*.

She banged hard on the door with her right hand. When no one answered, she fiddled with the lock and it opened.

He was sitting behind his desk hunched over a stack of papers, marking them up with a red pen.

“Hello,” Rozanov said, startled.

She had never seen him up close before. She had a vague idea what he looked like, but in person he was a lot more physically imposing than she'd imagined. He was more handsome too.

Why does his office smell like cigarettes?

“Do we have an appointment?”

Rose hadn't thought far enough ahead about what to say. She was too outraged to even consider it.

“No,” she said. “We don't have an appointment. I uhh...” She really should have planned for this. There was no excuse considering how long it took her to get there.

Those “transferable skills” from her first semester improvisation class would be very useful in this moment. That was a hefty eight-hundred dollars in tuition that she would never get back.

“I needed to talk to you about something,” Rose said, trying to sound tough.

“I’m sorry,” Rozanov said, eyeing Rose suspiciously. “I don’t mean to be a jerk, but are you a student of mine? I don’t think I’ve seen you in class before.”

Rozanov appeared almost amused and Rose noticed him tapping his foot on the floor. Did he think she was coming on to him? Ew. Gross. This guy really was a piece of work.

“No,” Rose said honestly. “I’m not a student... Actually I am a student, but I’m not in this department. I’m not in one of your classes. This isn’t about anything related to school, it’s about something more important.”

“Okay,” Rozanov said, shrugging one shoulder. “Then what is this about?”

She sucked in some air and then let him have it.

“Who the hell do you think you are?”

Fuck. That was way too harsh.

“Excuse me,” Rozanov said with anger radiating from his face.

Shit.

“What is your name,” he asked like he was going to call her parents.

“My name,” Rose stalled. “My name is Rose. Landry. Rose Landry.”

“Ms. Landry,” he repeated condescendingly. “What gives you the right to barge into my office and scream at me?”

Rose laid her cards on the table.

"I'm Shane Hollander's friend," she said, without elaborating further. She just let the information hang in the air between them.

Rozanov stiffened. "Is he okay?"

The concern was evident in his tone.

"Oh, so now you care if he's okay?"

Rozanov's eyes widened, not in fear or panic, but almost like he was intrigued. He looked at the open door. "Can you close that please?"

"I think I would feel more comfortable if it stays open."

Rozanov glared at her and Rose begrudgingly complied with the request.

"I know about you two," Rose said frankly once no one could hear them. "That you guys are fucking or whatever."

Rozanov stood up and Rose instinctively backed away. At six-foot-three, he towered over Rose's tiny frame.

"Don't worry," Rose assured. "I'm not going to say anything or try to get you in trouble. But I want you to know that he's really freaking out. Like, he's not okay. And it's your fault that his mind is so messed up. So you need to do something."

Rozanov leaned back against his desk.

“How is it my fault exactly,” he asked with a medley of anger and desperation. “He does not come to class. He does not answer my calls. He wants nothing to do with me.”

“Wait what?”

Rose wasn't expecting that response. She was at a loss for words.

“I have not seen him in a while,” Rozanov confirmed. “He won't talk to me. I've tried everything other than showing up at his room and begging him to talk to me.”

“But he—” she paused. “Are you sure?”

Rozanov cocked his head. “Yes, I'm sure. I think I would know if I had seen him in the past two weeks.”

Two weeks.

Rose considered it and realized that the timeline coincided with Shane's strange behaviour.

“Are you sure you didn't do anything?” Rose pressed him. “Because I've never seen him so depressed before.”

Even when he was pretending to be straight, he was never *this* bad

Rozanov nervously twirled his pen in his hand.

“I know what I did,” Rozanov said regretfully. “And I don’t think I can fix it.”

That was what she was worried about.

“Well too bad,” Rose said defiantly. “He’s fucking miserable. He’s ruining his life because of you.”

Rose wanted to tell him that she didn’t know what Shane possibly saw in him, but she held her tongue.

Then she had an idea. A fool-proof, brilliant idea.

“It’s his birthday on Friday,” Rose informed him.

Ilya shrugged. “Okay. And?”

Why was Rose always expected to come up with ideas on her own? She gave him the vague outline of a plan and that was good enough.

“Figure it out,” Rose said bluntly. “His dorm is –” she spotted a pad of sticky notes on Rozanov’s desk and grabbed it, along with a pen. She wrote down Shane’s dorm number on it. “If he isn’t there, he’ll probably be at the gym. We don’t have plans until 10 o’clock, so that’s plenty of time to do something nice for him.”

Rozanov wasn’t reacting.

"I can't make him talk to me," Rozanov said.

She gave him no choice. "You'll think of something. Just don't be creepy," Rose advised. "And do not, under any circumstances, tell him that we talked about any of this stuff."

She bolted from his office before he could try to weasel his way out of it.

Chapter End Notes

eeek rose is going to save the day!!

like and subscribe :)

Chapter 16: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there's 330 of you subscribed now... wild

i heard you all loud and clear and this chapter will be mostly pure fluff/smut as a treat for everything that i've put shane through

if you're enjoying the story so far, let me know in the comments - i appreciate everyone whose commented so far you guys are incredible <3

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

Shane had never been the type of person to make a big deal over his birthday. It was just like any of the other three-hundred-and-sixty-four days out of the year. He didn't need some big celebration or fancy party. He didn't want expensive gifts or a giant cake. This year, all he wanted was one thing: To be left alone.

Okay maybe two things. But one of those things was impossible.

It was the Friday before their reading week, which they colloquially nicknamed "spring break" despite the fact that it was nowhere near Spring, and there was still snow on the ground. Hayden and Jackie had left campus early the previous evening to catch their flight to Victoria.

Shane had planned to spend the morning cozy in bed and then go to the gym before getting brunch with Rose at their favourite diner and trying out their new specialty blueberry syrup. But unfortunately nature had other plans in store.

It was the middle of a blistering February snowstorm in Montreal. Although they had been warned of a heavy snowfall, it was much worse than anyone was expecting. It was being reported that Montreal had received at least five inches of snow overnight, which meant that schools were closed, people were working from home, and Shane was stuck all alone,

camping out in his dorm room with a sleeve of saltine crackers and using a hot pot to prepare old packets of stale ramen noodles.

On his birthday.

Students and faculty had received a university-wide email bright and early, around 6:30 am, that all classes were cancelled until further notice.

He wished he had known about this snow day in advance because he would've chosen to camp out with Rose and Lily. But they were on the other side of campus and practically snowed-in.

Rose texted him bright and early wishing him a happy birthday. So did his parents. When he saw his mother's phone number appear in his notifications he nearly had a panic attack.

What would she think if she knew that he had gotten kicked out of a practice for the first time in his entire life? That he'd tarnished his perfect little golden-boy image and punched someone until he drew blood.

Those weren't thoughts that he was ready to face quite yet.

He was lying in bed, working up the courage to sit up and face the day by himself, when he heard something.

Bam, bam, bam.

A knock at the door. Who could that be?

Shane didn't think that anyone would be stupid enough to risk the storm just to make sure he wasn't lonely on his birthday.

Bam, bam, bam.

Shane called out. “Rose?”

He quickly got out of bed, threw a pair of pants on and went to get the door.

“Coming!”

Bam, bam.

“Jesus,” Shane muttered. “I said I’m comin—”

The word caught in Shane’s throat when he opened the door and saw who was standing behind it.

Rozanov? How?

“This is my dorm,” Shane said, stating the obvious.

His eyes must be deceiving him. Rozanov was there in the flesh, standing in front of him, lips blue from the cold.

On his birthday.

In a snowstorm.

Did Shane manifest this somehow? Did the universe grant his birthday wish? Does the universe even work like that?

“You’re here,” Shane said.

Rozanov nodded. “Yes.”

How the hell did he even get there? Driving in these conditions would be unsafe with that much sleet on the roads. Not to mention just plain stupid.

Rozanov raised his eyebrows. “Are you going to invite me inside? Or let me keep standing in the doorway like an idiot.”

“How— how did you get here?”

“I teleported,” Rozanov said sarcastically. “Obviously I drove here.”

“The roads are—”

“Was fine,” he said. “I’ve seen worse. This was nothing compared to Russian winter. You act like you have never seen snow before.”

Shane blinked three times. His eyes were fine, but he still couldn’t believe what he was seeing.

“How did you know that this was my dorm?”

Rozanov smiled at the ceiling. “I have my ways.”

Bullshit. This had Rose written all over it.

“Are you a stalker now?”

Rozanov rolled his eyes. “Yes, I am big evil stalker,” he said sarcastically and puffed out his chest. “You must be so terrified of me.”

Shane’s brain still hadn’t quite caught up to the outline of Rozanov standing in front of him. Was this even real? Was he still dreaming?

“Move,” Rozanov said gruffly, before he walked inside the room without Shane’s permission. Shane closed the door behind them.

Rozanov’s teeth were now noticeably chattering.

“You’re freezing,” Shane observed. “We need to get you in bed before you turn into an icecube.”

Shane started unmaking the bed for Rozanov to slide into.

Rozanov flipped his shoes off and smirked. “Already trying to get me into bed, Hollander?”

“Shut up,” Shane said, hiding a smile.

He pulled up the covers and Rozanov got under them. Shane helped him with his shirt.

“Lie down,” Shane instructed. “And stop looking at me like that.”

A sly grin crept onto Rozanov's face. "Looking at you like how?"

"You know exactly how," Shane said, trying his hardest not to give him any satisfaction. "Why did you even come here anyway?"

As happy as he was to see Rozanov's face again, Shane was still conflicted by the surprise visit. He thought they were over for good. And Rozanov showing up unexpectedly gave him emotional whiplash.

"I wanted to see you," Rozanov said. "You haven't answered my texts in weeks."

Rozanov had barely texted. But it's true that when he did, Shane ignored him.

"I was busy."

Busy fucking other guys, Shane's brain provided.

"With who?" Rozanov's tone was jealous.

That answered the question of whether Ilya was still capable of reading Shane's innermost thoughts.

Shane raised a coy eyebrow and shrugged. "Wouldn't you like to know?"

"Wow," Rozanov said jokingly. "You have changed, Hollander."

Shane knew he was kidding, but it was also true. These two weeks had changed his perspective on their relationship. He didn't know if it would be possible to go back and pretend like nothing happened.

"Seriously," Shane said once Rozanov was securely under the covers and no longer shivering. "What are you doing here?"

"You ran away," Rozanov said simply. "Why?"

Shane shrugged. "You told me to be with other people."

"I didn't mean that you should do it at that exact moment," Rozanov clarified.

They both laughed. "You should have been more specific then."

They stared at each other for a while.

"I'm sorry," Shane said.

Rozanov nodded. "I didn't understand why you had to stop talking to me. It killed me."

Shane looked at the floor.

"I thought..." Shane's strong voice faltered, "I thought we were happy."

Shane regretted it as soon as he said it. It was too much.

"We were," Rozanov agreed.

“Then why did you tell me to go be with someone else?”

He didn't understand. He would never understand how Rozanov could throw away everything they had over nothing.

Rozanov took a beat.

“You said my name.”

Huh?

Shane scrunched his forehead in confusion.

“What do you mean?”

Rozanov leaned back against the headboard and crossed his arms. Shane tried to ignore the way his abs were flexing.

“That morning, we were having sex and you said my name. You said *Ilya*.”

Shane felt like he had been placed on mute. He couldn't find the will to speak.

Shane didn't even remember saying it.

That's what made Rozanov so upset? He said his stupid name during sex? Doesn't he know that nothing you say when you're having sex counts as an actual admission? It's like saying something stupid while you're drunk. The polite thing to do is just ignore it.

“That’s it? Are you fucking kidding me right now?”

Shane was irate but he also couldn’t help but find the situation slightly humorous. A man in his thirties who thought that being called his first name during sex was somehow cause for alarm.

“I am not kidding,” Rozanov confirmed with a completely straight face.

“You let me think—” Shane was so mad he could barely get the words out. “You made me think that I had done something wrong. I replayed that morning over and over in my head for days wondering what I did to make you treat me like that. How could you let me think that?”

“I’m so sorry,” Rozanov said, running a finger along Shane’s jawline. “Please forgive me.”

Rozanov looked at Shane like he was going to die if he didn’t forgive him.

The butterflies in Shane’s stomach were doing aials. He cursed the way that Rozanov was capable of making him feel like this even when he was extremely angry at him.

“You hurt me,” Shane pointed out. He wasn’t going to just fall all over him because he showed up with some big romantic gesture. He was going to have to earn it.

“I know.”

That’s it? That wasn’t good enough.

“And you just show up here, hoping what? That I’ll still want you? Did you really think that I wouldn’t have moved on by now?”

Rozanov sat up and took Shane's hand. His skin was still cold.

"I wasn't thinking," Rozanov explained. "That's the problem. You make me unable to think."

"Then why are you here," Shane asked softly, like he was afraid of the answer. Maybe he was afraid. "What do you want from me?"

A stupid smirk scrawled across his face.

"Honestly, I was just hoping to get laid," Rozanov said in jest.

Shane smacked his hand away and it landed on the duvet. Why couldn't he be serious for one fucking second?

"I can't stand you," Shane lied. "I take pity on you, let you get naked in my bed and you still can't be honest with me."

Rozanov's expression turned serious.

"I missed you," he said, looking up at Shane with sorrowful eyes. "I felt horrible about how we left things and I wanted to make it up to you."

He made it sound so simple. But he didn't know everything that Shane had done to cope in the time they were apart. Shane didn't know if it was possible to ever fully forgive Rozanov for what he put him through.

He thought that Rozanov didn't want him anymore. For two weeks, Shane was broken and in agony over that belief. And now he had to pretend that those two weeks never happened. He didn't know if it was possible to erase those experiences from his brain.

“How,” Shane asked. “And don’t say that you’re going to make it up to me with sex because I swear to god I’ll kick you out right now and never speak to you again.”

Rozanov smiled and held back whatever inappropriate thought was percolating on his tongue.

“We can spend the day together,” Rozanov suggested. “Make up for last time being cut short. We can’t go anywhere anyway. So you’re stuck with me. Might as well make the most of it, no?”

A smile tugged at the corners of Shane’s lips.

“What would we do all day?”

Rozanov’s eyes darkened, but his answer was surprisingly wholesome.

“Whatever you want, sweetheart.”

Shane shifted. “Whatever I want?”

Rozanov gave a confirmatory nod.

Shane didn’t really know what to do now. Part of him wanted to jump on top of Rozanov and spend the next few minutes helping to raise his body temperature. But a larger, more stubborn part of him refused to give Rozanov the satisfaction of being so easily seduced.

“Well, since I can’t really go anywhere,” Shane continued. “I was just going to watch tv in bed.”

Rozanov considered it. “We can do that,” he said.

“Really?”

He grabbed Shane’s laptop from the side table and opened the lid. “What should we watch?”

“Promise you won’t judge me,” Shane said.

Rozanov tilted his head and raised his eyebrows. “Why? Is it weird?”

“No.” Shane shook his head.

“Is it something kinky?”

“Of course not,” Shane said defensively.

“No, of course not,” Rozanov mocked Shane’s defensiveness.

Shane sighed and then confessed his embarrassing obsession.

“I was going to watch The Great British Bake Off.”

Ilya’s eyebrows narrowed. “What is this show about?”

“The title is pretty self-explanatory.”

Shane settled onto the bed on top of the covers, typed “Netflix” into the search bar, found the titles under “continue watching”, navigated to the latest episode and pressed play.

“I have a feeling you’ll love this,” Shane said. Rozanov seemed unconvinced but content to fulfil his promise to do whatever Shane wanted.

Every once and a while, Rozanov would ask Shane a question about how the judging worked, and Shane would explain the concept, and then Rozanov would forget and ask again.

“It’s the technical challenge,” Shane explained. “They’re making Swiss rolls, but they don’t have a full recipe, and then the judges are going to rank them in order from worst to best.”

“You watch this often?” Rozanov acted like he wasn’t already fully invested in the outcome of the Swiss rolls.

“Yes,” Shane admitted.

They were thirty-five minutes into the episode when Shane felt Rozanov’s hand touching his thigh. He didn’t object, but he later wished that he had because once it happened he couldn’t seem to focus on the show anymore.

The episode ended and neither one of them had acknowledged Rozanov’s hand placement.

“Do you want to watch the next one,” Shane asked.

Rozanov said nothing.

“Do you...” Shane trailed off when he saw Rozanov’s expression.

He stared in Rozanov's eyes, then down at his lips, which were extra pink today, and then back up at his eyes again, trying to commit every detail of his face to memory.

Rozanov looked like he was desperate to be kissed.

Or maybe it was Shane who was desperate.

"Shane," Rozanov whispered a soft plea.

He knew that Rozanov wasn't going to try anything, not after the big deal Shane had made about it. It had to be Shane's choice.

So Shane leaned in and kissed him, with mild apprehension at first, and then Rozanov slipped his tongue inside his mouth and Shane accepted it. He lifted Shane onto his lap and suddenly Shane felt like he could breathe again for the first time in weeks.

Rozanov slammed the laptop closed and put it back on the table to get it out of the way.

"I need... I need you," Shane breathed.

"I thought you hated me," Rozanov said as their lips broke apart.

Shane smiled against Rozanov's mouth. "I do hate you."

"Liar."

"Not a liar," Shane protested.

“Say my name,” Rozanov purred.

“Mmmmm, *Ilya*,” Shane moaned.

“Again.”

“Ilya, Ilya, Ily—”

Ilya pounced on him, flipping Shane over and throwing his body over Shane’s and kissing him so hard that Shane couldn’t breathe.

Shane tapped Ilya’s arm. “Wait,” Shane said with the biggest smile on his face. “Wait, stop. Can’t breathe.”

Ilya pulled back and laughed.

The laughter subsided when Shane stuck his hand in Ilya’s pants and started roughly stroking him through his boxers, causing Ilya to launch himself forward onto Shane again.

“I need—“ Shane panted.

“I know,” Ilya assured. “Me too.”

Shane could feel his cock straining against the constrictive fabric of his pants.

"Take this off," Ilya said, pointing to Shane's clothes. Shane quickly undressed himself while Ilya down at him.

"Let me," Ilya said, lifting up Shane's legs to remove his pants and socks, and then discarding them recklessly on the floor.

Ilya climbed back on top and pressed his body to Shane's, leaving no space between them.

"What do you want," Ilya asked.

"You," Shane said. "Just you."

He tugged at Shane's waistband.

"I will make love to you."

Shane moaned.

"And then," Ilya warned. "I will fuck you."

He nibbled Shane's earlobe and hissed in his ear.

"I am going to do everything that I wanted to do to you for the past two weeks."

Shane nodded eagerly.

"Yes, do that," he encouraged.

Ilya smiled hungrily.

“Whatever you say, sweetheart.”

Ilya kissed him again, and Shane reached over to his side table with his eyes closed and found the lube. Ilya took it from him but didn't open it yet. He kissed down Shane's front, ignoring his cock as it bobbed against his stomach, instead going lower. Shane held his legs up to his shoulders and his mind went blank when he felt the warmth of Ilya's tongue.

It took all of Shane's strength to avoid confessing his love to him right then.

"Yes, please... please."

When Shane felt himself on the verge of coming, he tapped the back of Ilya's head.

"Now."

Shane watched as Ilya slicked himself up with lube and positioned himself at Shane's entrance. He pushed in carefully, until he was fully inside. Ilya's thrusts were slow and deep, and drove Shane crazy. He'd almost forgotten that this is what sex could be like.

“I'm not going to last,” Ilya admitted. It felt like he was asking for permission.

“It's okay,” Shane said altruistically. “I want you to.”

Ilya smiled at how accommodating Shane was being. But really Shane was flattered. He didn't mind that it would be over soon because he knew that this wasn't the last time. There would be plenty of time for Shane to get off. They had all day today to do it again. And Shane knew he didn't have to worry about Ilya making it up to him, just like he promised.

Ilya increased his speed, chasing his orgasm until his body locked and then convulsed on top of Shane's.

“Ahhh, fuck.”

Watching Ilya's face as he came nearly made Shane come undone too. He felt a twinge of excitement that Ilya had finished first for once.

Ilya barely took three seconds to process his own orgasm, when he replaced his dick with his fingers so swiftly that Shane barely had time to mourn the loss of sensation.

“Oh,” Shane exclaimed in surprise. “Okay.”

He was going to get his orgasm after all.

Ilya looked straight into his soul as he fingered him.

“Is it good?”

Shane nodded, unable to form proper words.

“Mmmhmm. Feels so good.”

Ilya hooked his fingers and Shane melted into the mattress.

“Yeah, there. Please... more.”

Ilya added a third finger, stretching Shane's hole and Shane's body started to jerk with unadulterated pleasure.

"There you go," Ilya encouraged as he continued to coax him with his fingers.

Shane's hips were grinding. "More," Shane pleaded. "Need more."

Ilya seemed amazed as Shane rocked back against his hand.

"You have three fingers and you still need more," Ilya asked, slightly taunting, but mostly in awe.

Shane's face grew even warmer.

"If you need more, I will give you more."

Ilya bent his head down and started giving Shane a blow job. Shane wasn't aware that this was even a possibility. He had never thought to ask for it before. Ilya just knew.

Clearly it was the right decision because Shane came down Ilya's throat in a matter of seconds.

He kept his hand still as Shane continued impaling himself on his fingers, riding out the aftershocks.

When Shane stopped moving, Ilya slowly removed his fingers and lifted himself up to kiss him. When they kissed, Shane could taste himself on Ilya's tongue.

"So," Shane said seductively, "Are you going to fuck me now?"

Ilya looked at Shane like he was going to eat him.

“I was kidding,” Shane quickly denied the advance. “I need fifteen minutes. At least.”

Ilya blew a raspberry at him and flung himself back on the bed. “No fun.”

Shane snuggled in next to him and they both stared at the ceiling, talking wistfully.

“Screw you,” Shane said, not meaning it in the slightest. “I’m glad you’re here.”

“My car got stuck twice,” Ilya said. “I left it on the side of the road. I had to walk half a mile to get here.”

Shane was horrified. “How do you not have frostbite? Let me see your fingers.”

“They are all still there if that is what you are worried about,” Ilya joked. “I counted.”

Shane carefully inspected each of Ilya’s fingers one by one. The same fingers that were inside of him less than a minute ago.

“Driving in these conditions was really stupid,” Shane chastised. “You could’ve killed yourself.”

“Be happy that I didn’t,” Ilya said

Shane kissed Ilya’s palm. “I am happy,” he said sincerely.

“It’s been too long,” Ilya noted.

“It’s only been a couple weeks,” Shane reminded him.

“That is too long.”

He wondered if Ilya meant that two weeks was long to go without Shane, or too long to go without sex altogether. But he didn’t pry.

“Yes,” Shane agreed. “Let’s not do that again.”

Shane wished that they could do this everyday.

It occurred to Shane that they had never spent this much time together at once. It was nice. It felt domestic, and the domesticity felt normal. He hoped that Ilya felt the same. He hoped that it wouldn’t scare him and he wouldn’t try to push Shane away again.

“I’ve wanted this for so long,” Ilya whispered. “Since the day I met you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Having you like this, in your bed, screaming my name.”

Shane doubted that he had been *screaming*, but the point was taken.

“You have me,” Shane assured. “I’m yours. I’m all yours.”

Ilya swiped his index finger over Shane's bottom lip. The mark that was there a few days ago had disappeared, but Shane still thought for a second that Ilya was going to ask him about it, as if he would somehow intuit that it had been there.

"I love your lips," Ilya said.

I love you, Shane thought. I love everything about you. Every part.

"It's my birthday," Shane whispered.

"Oh," Rozanov said, seeming unsurprised. "Was it everything you wished for?"

Shane smiled and nodded. Was it too cheesy to say that this was his present?

Ilya smiled and gave him a quick kiss. "Happy birthday, Shane."

He was so fucking happy.

And then the bullet train of shame hit him all at once. He had slept with someone else. If he had just waited a couple weeks, none of that would have happened. Why couldn't he have just waited a few days?

It made Shane upset with himself, but also resentful of Ilya. He never would have done it if he hadn't thought that it's what Ilya wanted him to do.

He needed to tell him. If they were ever going to have a shot at a real relationship, then Shane was going to have to tell him everything. Ilya deserved to know.

Chapter End Notes

happy birthday shane!!

i still need to write the next ilya pov chapter but i thought i would post this one as soon as i was done so hopefully that works for everyone ❤️

Chapter 17: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hi ❤️

this chapter is the continuation of the previous chapter but from ilya's pov!

on a serious note... i hope you guys are enjoying the story for the most part. i know i am not the most seasoned writer. this is my first time writing this many chapters of any story ever, and i am my own editor. i like having complete control over my own writing but trust me that i do read your comments and take them to heart and appreciate every single one of them. if you don't like the story or the direction i've taken it in that is also totally fair. not everyone likes the same things and there's plenty of amazingly written fics on here to choose from!!

also, I've updated the tags please let me know if i am missing any. i'm going to go back and make this a recurring endnote. the story is not going to get any any darker from here but i do sometimes explore more serious themes in my writing because it's cathartic for me, and sometimes i forget that you aren't all in my head and don't know my thought process so i'm sorry for being careless and if anyone was harmed by reading my writing because that is the last thing i would ever want to happen

okay now enjoy ❤️

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

Ilya took a second to admire the way Shane's freckles twinkled in the dim light of his dorm room.

He had been dreaming about this for two weeks. During their prolonged separation, he had thought about Shane more times than he would care to admit.

Even though he had suggested that Shane should sleep with someone else, Ilya hadn't been able to bring himself to do the same. He hadn't even attempted it.

It wasn't lost on him how incredibly hypocritical his request was. How unfair it was to ask Shane to do something that he couldn't do himself.

It was humiliating to admit how much he wanted this. It wasn't just a *want* anymore. At some point - he wasn't quite sure exactly when - his desire for Shane had transformed into a need.

What was he thinking? He should have never let Shane walk out that door. He should have barricaded himself in front of it and made Shane stay and talk to him.

It didn't even occur to him to cancel his plans of surprising Shane that morning when he took a step outside to find that the entire neighbourhood was covered in snow. Nor did it occur to him to turn around and go home when he almost skidded off the road the first time. Nothing could have prevented him from seeing Shane today.

He didn't know what he was expecting would happen when he showed up at the foot of Shane's door unannounced. The most likely outcome he imagined was the door being unceremoniously slammed in his face. That's what he deserved, to leave empty handed and have to find his way back home in the storm. Shane should have screamed at him. He should have reported him to the university. He should have ruined his life. He could if he wanted to. Shane had enough evidence. He had their texts, which weren't overly salacious, but it's certainly incriminating to have your professor texting you to come over in the middle of the night and giving you the address of where to meet him. Shane kept those secrets even when he didn't have to.

Out of all the possibilities of how Shane was going to react to Ilya showing up out of the blue, this was the last thing that he was expecting. Sharing a bed with Shane again felt right, but he also didn't feel like he deserved to be welcomed back into Shane's life so easily after how he'd acted. A small piece of him wished that Shane had rejected him and sent him away.

But how could he stay away when he knew that Shane was as miserable as he was? He couldn't leave Shane to deal with that on his own. Not when he knew exactly how Shane was feeling.

"Happy birthday, Shane," Ilya said, bringing him in for a kiss.

Shane accepted the kiss but appeared to be deep in thought.

“Thanks,” Shane said finally.

“Hey,” Ilya said, determined not to let Shane get lost in his head. “Where did you go just now?”

“Nowhere,” Shane said quietly.

Shane’s mood had shifted considerably from a few moments ago. Was he already regretting this, Ilya wondered. Was he searching for another reason to run away?

“Should we eat something,” Ilya suggested.

“I’m not hungry,” Shane said.

“We could watch a movie.”

Shane shook his head slowly. “I’m not really in the mood.”

Ilya didn’t know what he had done to ruin Shane’s happiness so quickly.

“It’s your birthday,” Ilya reminded him. “You decide what we do.”

Shane avoided the topic. “I don’t want to do anything.”

Ilya nodded, unconvinced by Shane’s answer. There must be something he wanted to do besides lay in bed all day.

Then Shane spoke again. His words were harsher this time.

“You should probably go,” Shane said. “Do you not want to fo home to your wife? Is she not wondering where you are?”

The answer was no, Ilya’s wife was not wondering where he was. She rarely wondered where he was. She hadn’t even come home last night. But Shane didn’t need to concern himself with the intricacies of Ilya’s marriage.

“Is that what you want?”

Shane repeated the question back to him. “Is that what *you* want?” He sounded more upset than angry. “You got what you wanted right? You got laid or whatever. Why are you still here?”

Ilya hadn’t realized that Shane took his stupid joke seriously.

“Shane, I was kidding,” Ilya said. “I was obviously kidding. I didn’t really mean that.”

Shane shrugged. “Sometimes I can’t tell when you're kidding and when you’re being serious.”

“I promise,” Ilya said. “It was a joke.”

“You said you missed me,” Shane said, staring daggers at him. “What exactly did you miss about me besides seeing me naked?”

Ilya didn't know why that was such a difficult question to answer.

"I missed your face," Ilya said. "Your freckles." He ran a finger over the bridge of Shane's nose. "Your nose." He trailed his finger along the top of Shane's lip. "Your lips." He took Shane's chin in his hand. "Your chin." Ilya continued down the list. He stared at Shane's lips. "God, your lips," he said again.

Shane twisted his head to avoid being kissed.

"Other than my body," Shane said. "Name something that isn't physical."

"I missed your voice," Ilya said quickly, like a reflex. "The look in your eyes when you're mad. Like right now."

"I'm not mad," Shane said weakly. He barely had time for his statement to settle before saying, "No, actually I am mad at you. The last two weeks were hell, Ilya."

Ilya thought he realized what was going on. He showed up without any warning, surprised Shane, and swept him off his feet. But now that Shane is thinking about the situation with a clearer head, he doesn't want this anymore.

Ilya didn't blame him.

"I thought about you every day," Ilya said.

Shane softened a bit. "You did?"

"Yes."

“What did you think about,” Shane asked, finally meeting Ilya’s gaze.

Ilya let his heart speak for him.

“I thought about how much I love being with you,” he said truthfully. “How miserable I am when you are not with me. I thought about how sorry I was for all the stupid things I said the last time we were together. How I didn’t mean any of it. I thought about what I would say when I saw you again. How I would never stop showing you how sorry I was for the way I acted.”

Shane clearly wasn’t expecting that degree of honesty, because he didn’t seem to have any reaction to it.

“Say something,” Ilya demanded softly. “I want to hear your voice.”

“Ilya,” Shane said nervously, like he was holding onto a secret. “I have to tell you something.”

Ilya shifted his weight so that he was fully on his side, and faced Shane on the bed, giving him his full attention.

“Yes sweetheart,” he said. “Tell me.”

“I had sex with someone else,” Shane said like he was apologizing even though he had nothing to apologize for. He hasn’t been unfaithful. He was a single man, free to live his life how he chose.

It’s what Ilya had told him to do, so he couldn’t be too shocked. But it still stung.

“Okay,” Ilya acknowledged what Shane said without commenting further.

Ilya had no claim over Shane. He had no right to be angry or envious, especially since it was his brilliant idea in the first place.

Shane bit down on his lip. He still looked upset. Maybe there was more to the story.

“Is something wrong,” Ilya asked, sensing that Shane wasn’t done yet. “You can tell me. I will not be mad.”

Shane squeezed his eyes shut, like he was trying to erase the memory.

“It was horrible, Ilya. So horrible.”

Ilya breathed a sigh of relief. But his relief was instantly replaced with anger when Shane told him exactly why it was so horrible.

“What’s wrong, angel? Talk to me.”

Shane was having trouble getting the words out.

“I thought that you didn’t want me anymore,” Shane said, holding back tears. “I thought I’d never have you again. And I just needed to feel close to someone. I needed the pain to stop. I was trying to forget you, but it didn’t work.”

“It’s okay baby,” Ilya said, gently rubbing the knot in Shane’s right shoulder.

Something about the word *baby* made Shane bristle and pull away.

“What’s wrong?” Ilya asked him more forcefully this time.

Why did Shane suddenly not want to be touched?

“I just missed you so much,” Shane explained.

“I missed you too,” Ilya said. “So much. Shane, you have no idea. I was dying being apart from you. Dying to see you. To touch you.” He grazed Shane’s cheek and Shane didn’t pull away that time.

Shane’s brown eyes were glassy. “I fucked up,” he said. “I really fucked up.”

Ilya hated seeing Shane so broken up over this. He couldn’t understand why Shane felt so guilty over something that was clearly Ilya’s fault.

It didn’t matter what happened when they were apart. It was a blip in the grand scheme of things. Shane would forget about this boy soon enough. By the time the semester was over, it would be a distant memory.

“You did nothing wrong,” Ilya assured him. “Do not feel bad.”

“I wish people would stop telling me that,” Shane said solemnly.

“Well it’s true,” Ilya reiterated. “You are too hard on yourself.”

Ilya glanced at Shane’s right hand, which had fully healed, resting on the pillow.

“Is that all,” Ilya asked. “You had sex? That is not a big deal.”

Ilya was trying to be comforting, but Shane only seemed to get angry at Ilya's attempts to minimize what happened.

"Was it... bad," Ilya asked, searching for the right words to make Shane open up to him.

"It just wasn't the same. He—" Shane swallowed his words. "He was mean. But not like how you tease me and stuff. He was really mean."

Ilya's stomach dropped. This was all his fault. He had been callous and cruel and Shane was just trying to get back at him. He did this.

"Shane." Ilya tried to calm him down, to no avail. "It's okay. You're okay."

Shane looked like he was going to be sick.

Ilya spoke barely above a whisper. "You're okay."

"Are you hurt," Ilya asked.

Shane made a face that wasn't quite a grimace.

"I'm fine," Shane said. "It's... nothing. I'm being silly. Never mind."

The words coming from Shane's lips barely registered with Ilya, who was already imagining the myriad of ways that he was going to make that boy's life a living hell. How he was going to snap each of his bones one by one like tiny twigs and then mount his severed head on the wall in his bedroom so that he could admire his handy work at night before he went to sleep.

“What’s his name,” Ilya said, incapable of disguising his rage. “I need a name.”

“No,” Shane denied his request. “I’ll handle it. Let me deal with him. Right now I just need you to listen to me.”

“Shane,” Ilya said, taking a deep breath that did nothing to calm him down. “Is he a student? I know people. I am a very popular professor, I can fucking ruin him. Make life for him so miserable that he has to transfer somewhere else. You shouldn’t have to see his face ever again.”

Ilya was being completely serious. Sure it was wrong to leverage his power to destroy the life of a student, but that student had hurt Shane, and he deserved to be punished for it.

Shane shook his head. “I’m not going to tell you, so you can stop asking.”

“I will figure it out,” Ilya said matter-of-factly. “One way or another, I will figure it out.”

“No, you won’t,” Shane said firmly. “If you care about me, even a little bit, then you’ll just leave it alone. Please. For me.”

Ilya would let it go for now. It wasn’t worth upsetting Shane any further. But he was already thinking about how he was going to track this boy down later. Shane wouldn’t be able to keep this secret forever. He would find the truth eventually.

“Tell me exactly what happened,” Ilya demanded. He knew that it would only fuel his anger, but he needed to know the extent of it. Not knowing was worse. “This boy did something to you that you did not want?”

Shane disagreed with Ilya’s characterization of events.

“No it’s not like — it’s not that black and white, okay. It wasn’t only his fault.”

Shane paused and Ilya waited for a painfully long time for him to resume speaking.

“Being with him weirdly made me feel better for some reason. It made my brain stop yelling at me for a while.”

Now Ilya was the one who felt like he was going to throw up. The thought of Shane putting himself in that situation because of him was devastating.

“What do you mean,” Ilya asked for clarification. “Your brain is *yelling* at you?”

Shane spoke slowly, as if saying the words out loud was making them real.

“It’s like all my thoughts are trying to talk over each other and I can’t hear anything clearly,” he explained.

“Is your brain yelling at you now?”

“A little,” Shane acknowledged. “Not as much as it was an hour and a half ago.

“Why not?”

“Because you’re here,” Shane answered.

Ilya was terrified that he’d done something wrong. That he had hurt Shane somehow.

“Did I hurt you?”

“No, no, nothing like that,” Shane said sincerely. “I think... I just feel safe enough with you that my mind knows it can relax when you’re around.”

That made sense, Ilya thought.

Shane wasn’t finished.

“I don’t understand how you can be with someone who isn’t me and not be miserable,” Shane said.

“It’s complicated,” Ilya said.

Shane wouldn’t understand the nuances of Ilya’s decade-long marriage, so Ilya thought that it would be better to keep those details private. Maybe one day, when he found someone and tied the knot, he would understand better. But present Shane was too naive. He probably still believed that relationships were about love and trust rather than convenience. He wouldn’t understand why Ilya had settled for anything less than true love.

The truth was that Ilya didn’t view marriage in the same way that many people do - in the same way that Shane probably did. It was a piece of paper. A legal contract that he signed back before he had lived much actual life and before he understood the weight of what that kind of commitment meant.

But marriage and monogamy didn’t have any grand significance to him. While he would always love his wife, they weren’t soulmates. They weren’t even really lovers anymore. When Ilya did think about her that way, it was mostly just nostalgia clouding his memory.

He had been forced to grow up so quickly after his mother died. Faster than any young boy should. He clung to his wife like a port in the storm. She was his friend who became like family. He loved her, but never like this.

With Shane it was different. What they had wasn't about some misguided sense of loyalty. It was passion and devotion and completely untethered from practical considerations.

He feared that if he told Shane any of this, he would think he was a coward for not holding out for something real. He would know that he chose to build a life based on lies. And he would be right.

Ilya breathed warm air into Shane's ear. "I think about you more than I should."

Shane leaned over and kissed him. "I'm always happy when I'm with you," Shane said. "I just wish..."

"Wish what?"

That we could be together, Ilya thought.

"That you didn't have to leave," Shane said.

"I know," Ilya said. "But we have to leave this room eventually. You will need to go to class. I will need to go to work."

Shane nodded reluctantly.

"Will you stay with me until my birthday is over," Shane asked. "Until tomorrow?"

Ilya took Shane into his arms, cradling his head in his hands, and held him like that for a moment without saying anything.

“Yes,” he agreed. “Until tomorrow.”

Chapter End Notes

please let me know any tags i should add <3

Chapter 18: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

this chapter is something that has been mostly pre-written from the beginning. it's by far the most important chapter so far in the story. there are major reveals and confessions in this one so i hope it lives up to expectations!!!

thank you to everyone who has left encouraging comments and for following this story in progress (shout out to the 362 of you currently subscribed) <3

i live on compliments so leave kudos and comments and subscribe for more

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

The storm eventually passed and once the roads were safe again, Shane drove two hours to visit his parents at home in Ottawa.

He spent the majority of his short vacation sleeping until noon in his childhood bedroom and spending quality time with his family. Being at home made him feel centred and reminded him of his old self. He hadn't realized how much he missed that person. He had changed so much since last summer that he sometimes wondered if his parents would still recognize him.

On Tuesday evening, Yuna hosted a "welcome home" party for Shane, which was mostly an excuse for his mother show him off and brag about him to all her friends. But hearing nice things about himself only made him feel more guilty for the events leading up him being kicked out of an entire game. He couldn't stand to think of the reason he showed up late. He had blocked Ben's number and hadn't looked back since. He would probably have to confront him eventually, but that was future-Shane's problem.

The pace of life in Ottawa was slow and Shane quickly became restless. He realized that he didn't need a break. What he needed was to get back on the ice. So he ventured back to campus a few days early and spent the last stretch of his break living in his skates every day for hours on end, taking shots on an empty net and skating drills until his feet bled.

He needed to be prepared for their next game, presuming that he was cleared to play. Their team had lost the last one because Shane was forced to sit out. And of course, Shane blamed himself. He was determined not to let that happen ever again. He was going to be a better version of himself for the latter half of the semester. He was going to pull himself together.

No distractions.

The morning that classes resumed, Hayden texted Shane that he was coming by their dorm and that he needed to talk to him about something really important. When he woke up and saw the message, Shane nearly had a heart attack.

Were they going to kick him off the team? No, they wouldn't send Hayden to give him that message.

Would they?

At eight-fifteen, Hayden texted to let Shane know that he was coming, and by eight-twenty, Hayden and Jackie were standing in the doorway.

The two lovebirds were arm in arm, beaming. Shane asked Hayden to repeat what he just said because he must have heard him incorrectly.

"You did what," Shane practically yelled down the hallway.

"Got married," Hayden repeated, showing off his new expensive gold accessory. Shane glanced at Jackie's left hand and she had a small princess-cut diamond on her ring finger above a smaller plain band. Shane was not an expert on jewellery, but her ring looked far too expensive to be something that Hayden could comfortably afford.

“It was my grandmother’s ring,” Hayden said, when he noticed Shane staring.

Jackie locked Shane in a warm, restrictive embrace.

“We’re sorry for not inviting you,” she said regretfully. “It was so last minute. Just us and my parents. And Gus.”

“Who’s Gus,” Shane asked.

“My dog,” Jackie answered.

Jackie had a dog?

“He lives with my parents for now,” she elaborated. “Until Hayden and I can get a bigger place.”

Shane was stunned into silence at the news. They were so young. This seemed like it was all happening so fast, and yet it also made perfect sense. He couldn't bring himself to feel anything but happy for them, logic be damned.

Once he’d had time to process the bombshell, Shane pulled Jackie into another hug. “I’m so happy for you. For both of you.”

“We’re going to have an actual reception and stuff,” Hayden said. “So our friends can celebrate with us too.”

Hayden and Jackie shared a glance.

“Do you want to tell him,” Jackie asked, nudging her husband.

“Tell me what?”

Jackie smiled and Shane’s eyes nearly bulged out of his head. She was glowing.

“You’re pregnant,” he asked, horrified.

Jackie giggled infectiously. “No,” she said finally. Shane started to unclench.

“We had thought, maybe —” Hayden said.

Jackie shoved him in earnest that time. “Too much information, babe.”

Jackie shook her head and Shane wondered if she fully understood what she’d gotten herself into by making this decision.

“He wants you to be his best man,” Jackie revealed.

“Babe I wanted to tell him,” Hayden whined.

“You took forever.”

“So what do you say?” He raised his eyebrows at Shane. “Best man?”

It was a no-brainer. Shane loved both of them and he loved them even more together.

“Of course,” Shane said, honoured that they would even think of him. “Do I have to plan anything?”

“No, it’s just a fancy title,” Jackie said. “We’re not doing the whole bachelor/bachelorette thing.”

“Yeah bachelor parties are lame,” Hayden said, uncharacteristically. Shane couldn’t remember an occasion where Hayden had ever turned down the chance to drink or party.

Maybe marriage had changed him already.

“Works for me,” Shane said. “I feel like I should have gotten you guys a gift or something... a blender or some towels with your initials on them.”

Jackie smiled. “We have enough towels, but we’ll let you know if anything changes.”

“Wait, does this mean you’re moving out,” Shane joked.

Hayden laughed dryly. “Yeah, enjoy the one bedroom, man.”

“Maybe we can all get dinner some time this week,” Shane suggested. “To celebrate. My treat.”

“That would be great,” Jackie accepted the invitation on behalf of both of them. Shane supposed that you could do that when you’re married.

“How about after tomorrow’s game,” Shane suggested.

Hayden's face lit up. "You're playing tomorrow? So you talked to Coach and sorted things out?"

"Of course I'm playing," Shane brushed off the insinuation. "I'm Captain. He can't bench me forever."

His suspension was only supposed to be for one game anyway. Shane hadn't addressed the whole throwing a fit in the locker room situation yet. But too bad, everyone was just going to have to deal with it. This was his championship to lose, and he was going to get his team there. Shane was planning to show up at the rink tomorrow and force them to let him play. If they wanted him to leave, they would have to carry him from the ice kicking and screaming.

"It's a plan," Hayden said. He reached out to shake Shane's hand, which seemed overly formal but also fitting for the occasion.

Hayden took Jackie's hand and she rested her head on his shoulder as they left down the empty hallway.

Seeing them so happy made something inside of Shane break wide open. Part of him wondered if he would ever have something like what Jackie and Hayden had. He loved his friends, and he was truly excited for them to start their lives together. He just wished that it was as easy for him to be with the person he loved.

After making up on his birthday, Shane had returned to Ilya's class on Monday morning. He took his typical seat in the back row, and absorbed approximately zero-percent of the material, content instead to just observe Ilya's lips move as he spoke. On the rare moments that Ilya would look up at him and make eye contact, Shane would mouth something like "stop it" until he relented.

Afterwards, Shane followed Ilya back to his office. While they were climbing the steps to the third floor, Ilya had offhandedly mentioned that he had something he wanted Shane to see.

Shane was intrigued.

When they finally stumbled through the entrance, Ilya followed shortly behind Shane.

“Notice anything different,” Ilya asked with a cheshire grin.

Shane’s gaze gravitated to the forest green love seat situated next to the small window on the back wall. The natural light shone through the glass and hit the fabric, making it look almost golden. Shane imagined that the seats were warm, and he was as almost as excited to be fucked on it as he was to possibly take a nap on this couch in the middle of the day.

“You bought a couch,” Shane asked, reserving his opinion about the new purchase.

Ilya circled Shane, pushing himself up against Shane’s back and whispering in his ear while massaging his shoulders.

“Do you like it?”

“People are going to talk when they see that you have a couch in your office,” Shane mumbled.

“Maybe I am tired,” Ilya offered a suggestion.

“Because you’re so old,” Shane teased.

Ilya spun him around so that their noses were almost touching. “Because I am making love to a beautiful man all day.”

Ilya leaned in to kiss him and Shane turned his head slightly so that Ilya's lips landed closer to his cheek.

"I wish I could," Shane said, ruining the mood. Then he leaned up to kiss Ilya's pout away. He kissed him for longer than a reasonable kiss should have lasted.

"Maybe another time," Shane said, his teeth grazing Ilya's lower lip.

"You know that you are a tease," Ilya said, accusingly.

Shane just smiled.

"Where are you running off to," Ilya asked, failing not to sound possessive.

"Library," Shane said. "I have so much studying to catch up on."

"Yes of course," Ilya said.

"Hey, it's your fault you know," Shane highlighted.

Ilya looked around the empty room that they had all to themselves.

"If you ever need a quiet place to study, you can use my office."

"Are you sure," Shane asked, not wanting to be a nuisance.

"Sure," Ilya shrugged. "What's mine is yours."

Shane's heart skipped a beat.

Mine.

"Is it weird for me to use your office to study?"

Ilya's lips twisted. "That would be the least weird thing we've done in here."

Spending a few hours together wouldn't hurt. And Shane did need a quiet place to study. And the library was so far away. Well, it was only five minutes away, but it meant he would have to go outside. And it was cold outside. The temperature was actually fairly good for this time of year, but still, it would be so much easier to just stay put.

"Okay," Shane agreed. "I'll stay."

"Good," Ilya said, already making his way back to his desk.

Shane took a seat on the couch and started pulling his notebook out of his backpack.

This is fine, Shane told himself. It was totally normal for them to do this.

Shane spent the first fraction of the afternoon in Ilya's office. But for once, he wasn't in a compromising position. They didn't even bother locking the door because it wouldn't be an issue if someone happened to walk in on them like this.

Ilya was sitting at his desk grading papers, and Shane was lounging on the couch studying for a test. He was resting the back of his head on the side of the couch and holding his textbook above his face to read.

Occasionally Ilya would glance over at Shane, catch his eye and smile. And Shane would smile back, briefly, before returning to his studies.

It felt normal, comfortable, like they had done it a thousand times before.

Shane could imagine spending many more days like this. Sitting on the lonely black couch together at Ilya's apartment, legs entwined, touching toes, reading books silently, reading the interesting parts out loud, laughing, talking, just soaking up the joy of each other's company without the pretense of anything more.

After an hour or so of peaceful silence, Ilya sighed dramatically, rose from his chair and walked over to Shane. He bent down to his knees and gave him a peck on the lips.

"What are you working on?" He peered over at Shane's textbook.

"Geology," Shane said, his eyes fixed on the pages. "I have a test next week."

"Ugh, boring," Ilya said.

"Extremely," Shane agreed. "Nothing like your class."

"Yes I keep things interesting," Ilya said with a smirk. "Or maybe you just enjoy staring at me while I teach."

"I don't stare," Shane objected.

“You do stare,” Ilya confirmed.

“Then I’ll stop.”

Shane turned his attention back to his studying and Ilya pried the book from his hands and closed it before setting it down on the floor.

“No,” Ilya said. “Because if you stop staring at me then I will not do this...”

He tried to lean in and kiss Shane again, but Shane was too quick and put his hand in front of Ilya’s mouth. Ilya licked Shane’s palm.

“Ew,” Shane said, wiping off his palm on his hoodie. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

Shane couldn’t help but laugh.

“Why is there something wrong with me wanting to kiss you?”

“There’s not,” Shane said. “But I’m busy. So are you.”

“We can take a break.”

Shane considered the proposition for a moment, but ultimately denied it.

“Go away,” Shane said, half-heartedly. “I’m studying.”

Ilya mocked his diligence. “Such a good student.”

“I am, actually,” Shane retorted. “My grades this semester are really good.”

“I wonder why that is,” Ilya said sarcastically.

“Fuck you,” Shane said, genuinely insulted. “You’re a bad influence.”

Ilya grinned. “The worst,” he agreed. “When is your next class?”

“I have a couple hours,” Shane said, eyeing Ilya suspiciously. “Why? Do you have something in mind?”

Ilya picked some fluff off Shane’s hoodie. “I don’t know if we have enough time for all the things I have in mind.”

Shane hummed suspiciously. “When has it ever lasted longer than ten minutes?”

Ilya’s lips curved upwards ever so slightly.

“That’s some big talk from a man who has never lasted more than five.”

Ilya reached for Shane’s belt and Shane didn’t stop him.

“Fine,” Shane said as Ilya began unbuckling. “We take a short break, and then you let me keep studying.” He set the terms of their truce.

“Shane,” Ilya said. “Stop talking.”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Shane said sarcastically. “Is me talking getting in the way of your plans. Pervert.”

“Do you kiss your mother with that mouth,” Ilya asked.

Shane didn’t have a witty comeback.

“Yes,” he said honestly.

“Such a good boy,” Ilya teased. “With such pretty lips.”

He dropped his voice an octave.

“How am I supposed to get anything done with you laying here like this, hmmm?”

“I’m not even doing anything,” Shane protested.

“Not true,” Ilya said. “You had that look in your eyes that you get when you’re focused.”

Shane’s heart expanded in his chest.

“I wasn’t aware that I had a look for that.”

“You do,” Ilya said. “It is very cute. Practically irresistible.”

“You talk a lot,” Shane observed.

“Then shut me up,” Ilya challenged.

Shane’s mouth was already salivating at the thought. “How do you want me,” Shane asked eagerly.

Ilya pushed a loose strand of black hair out of Shane’s face. “On your knees,” Ilya instructed. It wasn’t as specific an instruction as Shane was used to, but maybe he knew what Ilya wanted well-enough that he didn’t need specific instructions anymore.

Hearing those words ignited a pavlovian response in Shane. He sank to his knees and began peppering kisses at the outside of Rozanov’s fabric covered crotch, tracing the outline of his erection with his tongue. Then he started stroking his length through his pants drawing a soft moan from the man.

“I bet I could make you come just from this,” Shane said with a new confidence that felt earned.

“I could come just from looking at you,” Ilya said sincerely. “So beautiful.”

Shane felt tears welling up in his eyes, which was incredibly fucking weird and out of place considering he was handling Ilya’s erect cock.

Shane unzipped Ilya’s fly and undid his belt buckle. Ilya was staring down at him the entire time, watching his every move.

“Close your eyes and lie back,” Shane said, soothingly. “I’ve got you.”

Ilya did as he was told without any fuss. He shut his eyes and folded his hands and rested them behind his head.

“Fuck, Shane.”

“Mmhmm,” Shane hummed.

Shane’s tongue was pressed against the tip of Ilya’s penis, leaking saliva against the outside of his boxers. Ilya was tugging at the back of his head and Shane could feel him growing more desperate when Ilya's body abruptly shifted away.

“Oh fuck,” Ilya said suddenly, and yanked the waistband of his pants back up.

In the rare moments they had spent together over the past several weeks, Shane had become innately accustomed to the repertoire of Ilya’s various sex noises and what they meant. He could often tell exactly how many seconds he had left by how spaced out his grunts were.

That’s how he knew that Ilya’s reaction was definitely not in response to anything that Shane was doing.

“Jesus, Sveta. Have you forgotten how to knock?”

While on his knees with one hand gripping Ilya’s dick through his boxers, Shane’s head spun one-hundred-and-eighty degrees to see a tall beautiful woman with curly auburn hair standing in the doorway. She was wearing a navy blue dress and high heels and was carrying a small purse in her left hand.

If she had been thirty seconds slower, she would have walked in on them in the act.

“Professor Vetrova,” Shane gasped.

He had met her before, when she was a guest lecturer in one of his fall semester courses. She was an amazing speaker and cared a lot about her students. Actually, he'd seen her around quite a bit, at freshman orientation and at the many student plays that Rose was always dragging him to. She was very active in supporting student life on campus. He had even seen her at a couple of his games. She was a hockey fan.

She opened her mouth and spoke in a slight Russian accent. "Don't mind me," she said, gesturing to Ilya's hard penis. "Carry on."

Carry on with what? Sucking off his professor in his office in the middle of the work day?

Shane sprung to his feet and brushed the air off his clothes. "You didn't lock the door," Shane seethed at Ilya.

"He is very forgetful," she observed.

Ilya pulled up his fly and adjusted his pants to somewhat hide his erection.

"It's good to see you again," she told Shane. "I see you've already met my husband."

Husband?

The word bounced off the walls in Shane's head. He had always known that Ilya was married but he never asked for details — not even his wife's name. Right now, he wished he had done more internet stalking. A quick Google search would have sufficed. He hadn't even checked Instagram. Shane wasn't very well-acquainted with social media. He hated how curated it all seemed. And he had never wanted to know anything about Ilya's wife before. It was better for him if he didn't have to think about her face while Ilya was inside him.

Shane's eyes darted to Ilya. "What's going on," Shane asked. "Are you two married?"

Professor Vetrova laughed in a way that felt cruel. “What gave it away?”

Shane stared at Ilya, who looked like he wanted to crawl under his own desk and hide. Hide from Shane, hide from his wife, hide from the fact that his entire life was a fucking lie.

“You know this actually makes a lot of sense,” she said brazenly. “I had a feeling that he was your type. Young, handsome, athletic... just a little bit shy –” She pinched the air.

Ilya interrupted her monologue. “What do you want, Svetlana?”

Ilya said something in Russian and it felt like he was trying to intentionally edge Shane out of their conversation.

If he weren’t so preoccupied with embarrassment, Shane would have been annoyed at her unexpected intrusion into his private sanctuary. This was *their* space. This was where *they* spent time together. And now it was infected. She had caught them.

But was there even anything to catch? She didn’t even seem surprised by what she had walked in on a minute ago.

“I wanted to let you know that I’m not going to be home for dinner tonight,” she said, peering around Shane as if he was no longer there.

Ilya put his hands in the air with his palms up.

“And you had to come by my office to tell me that?”

“I was on this side of campus, so I thought I’d be nice and come visit my husband during work hours for once. I didn’t know you were... busy,” she said, looking at Shane.

Shane felt his face heat up.

“I should go,” Shane’s brain supplied after a few seconds. He should have left much sooner but he was in shock.

His eyes began searching the room for where his belt had ultimately landed in the heat of passion. He decided that it would probably be better to come back for that later, at a less awkward moment.

“No, don’t be silly,” she said with a wave. “I was just leaving. I’m not sure when I’ll be coming home so don’t bother waiting up for me.”

Ilya acknowledged the information with a nod but did not utter a single word in response.

“It was nice to see you again Shane,” she said with a smile. “Even though I think you could do much better than my husband.”

And with that, she exited the office and shut the door behind her.

At that moment, time stood still. Ilya and Shane exchanged no words between them. Neither one wanted to break the silence.

Shane awkwardly shuffled his feet, incidentally hitting his belt with his big toe. *There it is.* He scooped it up and began threading it through the loop in his jeans.

“Are you leaving,” Ilya asked, his pants still unbuckled. “Don’t leave.”

Was he really expecting him to stay?

Shane huffed. “Of course I’m leaving,” he said angrily. “What, did you think I was going to stay after your wife walked in on us?” He said wife as if it was a dirty word that needed to be censored.

“Shane, calm down.”

Calm down? Calm down! Who the fuck did he think he was to tell him to calm down?

“That was humiliating, Ilya.”

“Why?”

He really was delusional if Ilya thought that any of what just happened was normal.

“I was on my fucking knees,” Shane yelled.

“I hardly think she noticed,” Ilya said, trying to be cute.

He thinks he’s funny. The lack of seriousness with which Ilya was treating the situation made Shane livid.

“What the hell was that,” Shane asked.

Ilya spoke matter-of-factly. “Svetlana is my wife. We have been married for ten years.”

Shane’s mouth dropped open.

“This is insane,” Shane told him. “You realize that this is insane.”

“Which part?”

“All parts,” Shane said clearly. “All of it is insane.”

“I’m sorry you found out this way,” Ilya said, not sounding very sincere.

“Fuck you,” Shane exploded. “I’m not some fucking toy that you can play with when you’re tired of your boring life.”

Ilya seemed confused by Shane’s outburst. He probably didn’t know that Shane had it in him to be such an asshole. But Shane was angry. He was angrier than he’d ever been. This was betrayal.

“We’ve over,” Shane said, on the verge of tears. “Whatever this was. It’s done. I never want to see you ever again.”

He sounded like he was about to cry. He *was* about to cry.

"I can't do this," Shane told him. "I can't – I won't let you treat me like this."

“Treat you like what?”

Shane sucked in air. “Like I don’t matter,” he said. “Like I’m nothing. I won’t accept that. Not from you. Not from anyone. I’m so fucking done feeling like this all the time.”

Ilya seemed surprised.

“I thought you could handle it,” he said, echoing an earlier conversation they’d had. “Maybe I was wrong.”

Shane pursed his lips and let out all his anger. “Fuck you, Rozanov. Don’t speak to me like I’m a child,” Shane demanded. “If I’m old enough for you to fuck me, then I’m old enough for you to tell me the truth.”

“Wow,” Ilya said, taken aback. “How long have you felt this way?”

“You’re such an asshole,” Shane said, shaking his head furiously. “You lie to everyone. To me, to your wife... Even yourself. You’re pathetic.”

“You knew who I was when you met me,” Ilya fought back. “I told you what this was. You’re just mad that you cannot change me.”

Shane scoffed. He opened his mouth and let it just hang there for a second with nothing to say. He knew that he would replay this fight later in bed tonight before he went to sleep and think of a million better things he should have said in the moment.

“You’re cheating on your wife,” Shane stated a fact.

“Cheating is not a real thing,” Ilya said. “It is made up.”

Shane’s jaw might as well have been on the floor.

“What are you even talking about?”

“We are animals,” Ilya said. “That is all we are. We eat and drink and fight and fuck. The rest is all made up. What is cheating? What is marriage? Why does any of it even matter anyway?”

We are attracted to each other, why should we waste our energy fighting what nature is telling us to do?"

If Shane had been an inch closer to Ilya's face, he would have smacked him.

"You're a fucking narcissist."

It was the first word that came to mind, but Shane wished that he had invented a more creative insult.

"You use people," Shane accused. "You treat them like they're nothing. You only wanted me because I didn't know any better. And now I feel stupid. So congratulations. You win. You fucking win."

Then, because he couldn't hold back any longer, a steady stream of angry tears flooded Shane's cheeks.

"Are you okay," Ilya asked, ridiculously. Of course Shane wasn't okay.

Shane just glared at him through wet eyes, astonished by the lack of understanding from his older counterpart. Was this all just a stupid game of cat-and-mouse to him? Did it mean nothing?

Shane had given him everything. All of himself. Completely. And in return, Ilya deceived him. He took all his affection and admiration and threw it in the trash.

For more than a month, Shane had been meeting him in his office and at his secret apartment for the purpose of getting on his knees to blow him or fuck him or whatever else he wanted. And yes, he knew that Ilya was married. But in his mind, Ilya's wife was nameless and faceless. She had no feelings or internal life of her own. And more importantly, she had no idea that Ilya and Shane were together. She didn't know about the private moments they had shared. She certainly didn't approve of their relationship.

She didn't matter. She didn't factor into the equation.

But now, Shane knew the truth. Ilya's wife was ethereally gorgeous, vastly intelligent and successful. She was Russian. She taught at the university. She was his age. She was part of his life in ways that Shane could never be.

"No," Shane said incredulously. "I'm not okay. Why the fuck would you think I was okay?"

Ilya looked almost afraid. It was unsettling. Shane had never seen that look before.

"I'm sorry," Ilya said. "I should have locked the door."

Shane scoffed. "That's not – do you really think that's why I'm mad?"

Ilya's body was stiff, like he was playing dead.

"Are you going to say anything?"

Ilya finally re-buttoned his pants. He stood up and walked briskly to the door and locked it. He pushed down on the knob to ensure that it was truly locked.

"Nothing has changed," Ilya said plainly. "You knew I was married. Everyone does. I don't hide it."

How could Ilya be so insightful and clever and yet always seem to miss the point of everything Shane said by a mile?

“It is not even a real marriage anyway,” Ilya said, vaguely.

“What does that mean,” Shane asked. “You aren’t actually married?”

“No, we are married,” Ilya confirmed. “But it is not... we do not try to control each other like married people do.”

After everything that had just occurred, Shane did not have the mental bandwidth to unpack that statement.

“Do you guys still...” Shane couldn’t even say it out loud.

“Still what,” Ilya asked.

His lack of candour only made Shane angrier. “What do you think, Ilya? Do you still have sex with her?”

Ilya’s eyebrows drew closer. “You want to know if I fuck my wife?”

Shane turned away slightly in embarrassment.

“Well, do you?”

“Yes,” he answered honestly. “Sometimes. Not recently.”

That could mean anything. Maybe he just meant that he hadn’t had sex with her this morning.

“What does recently mean?”

“Not for a while,” Ilya said, providing little clarity.

Shane played his game. “Okay, how long is a while?”

Ilya looked like he was doing a mental calculation, which made Shane furious.

“Over a month now,” Ilya replied.

Since me, Shane thought. *He stopped having sex with her because of me.*

He couldn’t stop thinking about the look on her face when she caught them. She wasn’t angry. She was barely even surprised.

How many times had she walked in on something similar with a different student? The thought made Shane’s stomach churn.

“She doesn’t seem like she cares about you being with me,” Shane pointed out.

“She doesn’t care,” Ilya agreed, putting a hand on Shane’s shoulder, which Shane promptly shook off. “It didn’t start out that way,” Ilya admitted. “But now, she accepts it.”

Shane was horrified. Why should anyone be forced to accept their partner cheating on them? Was it hypocritical for Shane to feel sorry for Ilya’s wife while he was helping Ilya cheat on her, probably. Did that make Shane any less aggrieved by Ilya’s deception, no.

“That’s terrible,” Shane said. “That’s completely disgusting. Do you realize how you sound right now?”

For some incomprehensible reason, Ilya chose that moment to lean in for a kiss.

“Stop,” Shane said, horrified. “I’ve heard enough. I can’t believe I actually thought... I can’t believe I actually thought—”

I can’t believe I ever thought I loved you.

“It is not a big deal,” Ilya said.

“Not a big deal,” Shane yelled, entirely forgetting the danger of passerby's hearing their argument. “Not a big deal? You’re married to someone else, Ilya. I’m your–your...”. He couldn’t think of the right word to describe himself.

“Mistress?”

“Fuck you,” Shane spat. “I’m not your fucking mistress.”

“No, you’re not,” Ilya agreed. “Svetlana and I have an arrangement.”

What does that mean?

“What kind of arrangement,” Shane asked, the hurt palpable in his tone.

“The kind of arrangement where what you and I are doing does not bother her,” Ilya stated. “You do not have to worry about her getting hurt or... retaliating against you, if that is what you are worried about. She is fine with it.”

Ilya had spent the last month letting Shane believe that he was cheating on his poor, unknowing wife. Shane had borne that guilt all this time. And now he was finding out that the narrative in his head was entirely false.

When Ilya didn't explain further, Shane said, "Go on. Tell me more about your weird arrangement with your wife where you fuck other people."

Ilya shrugged. "Neither of us are entirely straight. We are both very sexual people. And we agree that monogamy does not work for people like us."

A knot began to take shape in Shane's gut. Ilya was using excuses to justify cheating. Many people, regardless of their sexuality, managed to be faithful in long-term relationships. In Shane's mind, monogamy could work. He saw it work in his parents' marriage. They were genuinely happy together, and they had also married young. Jackie and Hayden were basically on their honeymoon right now, and Shane couldn't fathom either of them ever tolerating the other person stepping outside the established bounds of their marital relationship.

"She doesn't get jealous?"

Shane didn't think that he would be able to share his partner without being extremely resentful. Imagining Ilya with other people already turned him into a shell of himself. It would be a million times worse if he was actually married. If someone had publicly professed to have chosen only him and then still preferred to be with other people.

Ilya shook his head. "No," he said simply. "That is not something that we have ever felt towards each other."

"Do you feel that way about me," Shane asked. "When you think about me being with someone else, does that make you jealous?"

Ilya nodded. "Yes."

“But not when you think about her,” Shane said as more of a statement than a question. He was beginning to get a better sense of what Ilya was talking about.

“No,” Ilya agreed with Shane’s premise.

Shane’s brain begged him desperately not to say what he was thinking.

“Because you don’t love her.”

Ilya’s silence said everything Shane needed to know, and it emboldened him to take it a step further.

“You love me and you don’t love her.”

Ilya hesitated, and that tiny split-second of delay in his response spoke louder than anything else.

“It doesn’t matter what I feel,” Ilya said, bringing reason back into the conversation. “It does not change reality. She is my wife. I am thirty-four, you are nineteen.”

Their age difference sounded even worse when Ilya said it out loud.

“But you love me,” Shane said, stubborn as hell. “You can’t deny it. What we have is real.”

“We are not anything,” Ilya said. “It would never work. You would be miserable.”

He was avoiding the question.

Shane took a step closer towards Ilya.

“That’s not what I asked,” Shane brought him back to the issue at hand. “I asked you if you loved me, and you didn’t say no.”

“Stop saying that,” Ilya lashed out.

“It’s true,” Shane argued. “You love me.”

“Of course I do,” Ilya yelled.

Shane stood there, physically unable to react.

Holy shit.

Ilya loved him.

“I love you too,” Shane said without even having to think about it. “So what’s the problem?”

Ilya slumped back down onto the couch, looking extremely stressed out.

“It’s complicated,” Ilya said finally.

Not good enough. If they were going to have this conversation, then nothing could be left unsaid.

“Complicated how?”

“She is my wife,” Ilya said softly.

He said the word wife like it was sacred. Like it involved a degree of responsibility that Shane could never endeavor to understand. It was unbelievably ironic considering that Ilya was quite literally ready to cheat on his wife with Shane less than five minutes ago.

“It doesn’t seem complicated,” Shane said unflinchingly. “You fuck me and then go home to her. It’s actually very simple if you think about it.”

“It is the opposite of simple,” Ilya disagreed. “She is more than my wife. She is family. My only family.”

For the first time since they’d started fighting, Shane actually felt sorry for Ilya.

“You don’t have any other family in Canada,” Shane unwittingly poked at a sensitive topic.

“My parents are dead,” Ilya clarified. Shane noticed that Ilya didn’t get emotional while talking about it. He seemed to have put a fair deal of distance between himself and those events. “My brother and I do not talk. He could be dead too and I would have no idea.”

“I’m so sorry,” Shane said, gently petting Ilya’s arm. “I didn’t know.”

“Svetlana and I have been together since we were kids,” Ilya went on. “We left Russia when we were eighteen and moved to Canada to go to school. She was the only person I knew here. A few years later, we decided to get married. Then we started teaching at the university.”

Now Shane was being calm and Ilya was the frantic one.

“Svetlana is all that I have,” Ilya said, teary-eyed. “She is my only reminder of back home.”

Ilya sighed, exhausted by his own emotions.

“She is a childhood friend,” he continued. “I have known her my whole life. We built a life here together. But we do not love each other like that. Not anymore.” He paused. “Maybe not ever,” he tacked on.

It was too much to take in all at once. Shane tried to repeat the sentiment of Ilya’s words back to him.

“So what you’re saying is that you don’t feel the same way about her that you feel about me?”

Ilya took Shane’s face in his hands, staring deep into his eyes. “No,” he said steadfastly. “I have never felt what I feel for you with anyone else.”

Maybe he was stupid, but Shane believed him. Ilya was telling the truth. Shane had never been so sure of anything in his life.

“Would you ever leave her,” Shane asked. “Get a divorce and marry someone else. Or not get married again necessarily— you get what I mean.”

Ilya shook his head. He seemed ashamed.

“No,” he confirmed. “I could not do that to her. She is my family. My world.”

We could be a family, Shane thought. You and me.

Shane could tell that Ilya was afraid of the possibility of a different life. He had gotten so comfortable, so set in his ways, that he couldn't see the way out.

Shane wanted to help him see.

"But you love me," Shane said. It was a small plea for him to be brave. To meet Shane half way.

You love me. So choose me.

"I know we could be happy," Shane said. He didn't sound as confident in that statement as he'd hoped. "Whatever that means. Even if it means that I'll never play hockey again."

"You don't mean that," Ilya said. "You're being short-sighted."

Unfortunately, Ilya was right. Shane wouldn't be happy if it meant giving up his dreams. And he would resent Ilya every day for letting him do it.

But that meant that Shane didn't know where they could go from here.

"What am I supposed to do," Shane said. "Am I just supposed to keep going on like we have been, and pretend like nothing happened? Pretend that I don't know that you love me."

Ilya didn't seem like he liked that option any more than Shane did.

"We will spend these last five weeks together," Ilya decided, unilaterally, without any of Shane's input. "We will spend that time being disgustingly in love with each other and have plenty of sex, and then in the summer you will go home and start to move on from me. You will find a boyfriend that you can introduce to your parents. Next year, you will not be in my class and you will not have to see me anymore. Then, one day, you will become a big hockey star and move far away from here and forget about me."

It sounded so easy when he said it, but Shane knew that the reality would be impossibly painful.

“But I love you,” Shane said. Ilya’s solution would never work because Shane loved him too much. “That’s not going to go away no matter how much time we spend apart.”

If two weeks had felt like hell, what would an entire summer feel like? Shane didn’t think he could live through being away from Ilya for that long. Not being able to see him, to talk to him, to reach out and touch him. It would be torture. Self-inflicted torture.

What about an entire lifetime without him? How much worse would that be?

“You think that now,” Ilya said, as if he understood Shane’s heart better than Shane ever could. “It is your first love. You will have many loves in your life. You will realize that soon enough. What you’re feeling now will not last forever. I promise. And then you will thank me for letting you go.”

His heart was beating so loud he could barely hear his own thoughts.

Ilya had admitted that he loved Shane more than his own wife. He admitted that he felt more for Shane than he had ever felt for another person. And yet he was telling him with a straight face that all Shane needed was one summer to move on from him forever.

That was a lie and they both knew it.

“If you break up with me, then I’ll hate you,” Shane told him. It wasn’t a threat and he was trying to be malicious. It was just the truth. “I’ll never stop hating you, Ilya. I will curse you for the rest of my life if you give up on us.”

Ilya wiped a tear from his own cheek. "I would rather you hate me and have the life that you deserve, than keep you locked away with me."

Shane recalled a day in this exact office a few weeks ago, when Shane begged to be Ilya's prisoner. Right now, he wanted nothing more than to be locked away forever. To sacrifice everything for love. His career, his future prospects, fame, money, friends, everything.

But Ilya was choosing to be selfless. He was giving Shane what he needed in the long-run rather than what he wanted momentarily. Shane should have been grateful that Ilya was looking out for his future. One of them had to look out for him.

Shane *was* grateful. Ilya was doing this for him. He was sacrificing his own happiness so that Shane could have the life he was destined to have.

"Okay," Shane said, finally allowing reality to sink in. "We have five weeks."

He pushed Ilya back down on the couch and climbed onto his lap.

"Let's make the most of them."

Chapter End Notes

seriously ilya lock your damn door!!!

on a serious note, i feel the need to say that people need to stop being rude to fic writers. this has not happened to me personally but i completely understand why the writers of more popular fics have pulled their stories. people need to stop offering unsolicited criticism and making rude comments. it's not difficult to not harass people who are doing something for free and out of love for the characters.

thank you for keeping this comments section a positive space for everyone. love y'all 

Chapter 19: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

omg 20k hits!

hello to the 382 of you currently subscribed! i'd love to hear from more of you, so leave comments if you're enjoying the story so far (i don't bite)

i got kind of busy studying for exams and also i finally figured out how i'm going to end the story and so i've been spending most of my time writing the final chapter. but there's still a lot of plot in the middle that I hope y'all enjoy!

just fyi there will be a happy ending eventually. i'm not trying to keep anyone in suspense. Shane and Ilya will end up together, they just have to go through a lot first lol

Without further ado...

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

Hockey was the one constant in Shane's life. His northern star. It offered stability when everything else in his orbit was falling apart at the seams.

Shane didn't simply exist, he excelled. And it was important to him that he was the *best* at something. Being the best had been Shane's identity since he was old enough to skate, which meant that it had been a pet of him since he was old enough to walk.

Being chosen as captain had become an essential piece of that identity. It's something that he took extremely seriously, even if his recent actions didn't come close to living up to the standard that he'd imposed on himself.

He knew that this wasn't going to be easy. The most important things in life were never easy, Shane reminded himself, but they were worth it. He was willing to go in there with his tail between his legs and apologize, even though Shane still felt that he was in the right. But if it was for the greater good, then he was going to fall on his knees and beg for his spot on the team.

He tried to keep this in mind as he entered the rink that day. He was prepared for the humiliation. Ready to take his lashings and move on.

He took a deep breath as he took the turn into the locker room, and was met with looks ranging from excited to curious to disappointed. Troy barely acknowledged him, but at least he didn't say anything overtly shitty. So Shane counted it as a marginal win.

He sloughed off his jacket and started getting changed. If he was pretending like nothing happened, hopefully everyone else would too. Surely, they also wanted to win tonight. And Shane playing was their best chance at that happening.

"Gentleman," Theriault clapped his hands together as he walked in the room of half-naked hockey players.

Everyone in the room snapped to attention. But Theriault's eyes were fixed solely on Shane. It was a decidedly bad sign.

"Shane," Theriault said, neutrally. "You showed up."

"Of course, sir," Shane said. "I would never miss a game."

The next five seconds were the longest five seconds of Shane's life thus far.

"Are you planning on throwing another tantrum if we lose?"

Shane swallowed his saliva and his pride before answering.

"No, sir."

It was harrowing. The entire team standing there watching him. He was their captain. He needed their respect. If Theriault told him to get out, in front of all his teammates, Shane would be humiliated. Worse, he could never command the team ever again.

“Then get dressed and be out there in five.”

Theriault turned around and left without addressing the rest of the team.

That was it? That was the punishment Shane had been dreading for a week?

He'd expected more grovelling. More ass-kissing. This was nothing. A slap on the wrist at most.

“That's it,” Dallas yelled at the remaining players, who were all still standing around like they didn't have a game to play. “He fucked up the locker room and that all he gets?”

“Give it a rest Dallas,” his teammate J.J. said.

He gave Shane a pat on the back. “Good to have you back captain.”

“You have got to be shitting me.”

Shane looked directly into Dallas's eyes and gloated.

“Happy to be back.”

They won the game three to one, but the seething look on Dallas's face was its own prize.

After they left the arena, Shane went out to dinner with Hayden and Jackie to celebrate that night's win and their week-old marriage.

They spent the first couple minutes reviewing the menu. Shane ordered steak frites, Jackie ordered some kind of salad with added salmon, and Hayden ordered the most expensive filet that could be served.

Shane called ahead of time and asked if he could bring his own champagne to toast to the newlyweds.

He poured some champagne into each of their glasses, filling them nearly half-way to the top.

They each clinked glasses and took a sip.

"Now," Jackie started, folding her hands together in front of her. "On to the next order of business."

She said it like it was a board meeting and they'd just passed a new bylaw.

Shane's eyes darted between the Pikes, who appeared to have some kind of understanding.

"We need to find you a nice boyfriend," Jackie said.

"Oh god," Shane sighed, beginning to catch on to their real motive behind this dinner. "I don't need a boyfriend."

He already had a boyfriend. Sort of.

Hayden took over. “Look, I know things didn’t work with you and that Joe guy.”

“Joseph,” Shane corrected. He remembered the name of his own fake boyfriend - he wasn't a monster.

“Whatever,” Hayden brushed him off. “But you need to get back out there and meet someone. You can’t be alone all the time. It’s not healthy.”

They were staging an intervention for his tragic dating life. They’d been married for two seconds and were already taking pity on him for being single.

“Jackie has a really cute cousin,” Hayden said.

No offence to Hayden, but Shane didn’t trust his perception of cuteness. In Shane's experience, straight men never seemed to understand what was actually attractive in a man.

“His name is Eddie,” Jackie informed, holding her phone with a picture of who Shane presumed was Eddie up to his face. Shane reluctantly took Jackie’s phone.

It was a screenshot from the man’s dating profile. The person in the photo was carrying a large fish, which the caption implied he had caught himself, and he was wearing a backwards baseball cap. He also had a wispy moustache which Shane imagined felt prickly when you kissed him.

There’s no way in hell that they genuinely thought this guy was his type.

“This is an ambush,” Shane said, giving Jackie her phone back.

Their concern about his love life was completely unnecessary. If only they knew how many orgasms Shane had experienced in the past twenty-four hours.

Shane was so nervous he picked up a piece of bread and started buttering it. He didn't want to actually eat a slice of bread, especially since it was not one of his cheat days, but he needed something in his mouth to stop himself from blurting out the wrong thing. He knew that if Jackie and Hayden kept pressing him on it, he might tell them the truth out of pure annoyance.

“We’re worried about you,” Jackie said, wearing a sympathetic expression.

“When’s the last time you had sex,” Hayden asked abruptly, making Shane nearly choke on his bread.

“When’s the last time you went on a date,” Jackie tactfully interjected.

Shane continued chewing, leaving the happy couple in suspense.

He swallowed and then answered. “I went on a date a week ago with one of Rose’s friends, and I had sex yesterday. Will you drop it now?”

Jackie smirked while Hayden looked confused.

“Since when are you seeing someone,” Hayden asked.

“I’m not *seeing* anyone,” Shane calmly objected. “We’re just hanging out. It’s casual.”

And we’re in love. And he’s married. And he’s my professor.

“Since when does Shane Hollander do casual?”

Hayden used air quotes around the word *casual*.

He wasn't necessarily wrong. Shane had never been the type for a casual fling. But he couldn't exactly tell them the truth. This was the simplest way to get them off his back.

“Since I'm busy with other things,” Shane justified his choices. “I don't have time for a relationship right now.”

Shane felt the slightest tinge of guilt for lying to his friends. They were just looking out for him. They wanted the best for him. But Shane's desires had never lined up very well with his best interests. The best thing he could do for his future career would be to find a woman to settle down with and have a family, like Hayden was doing.

That's what Ilya had done. Gotten married to a woman he'd known his entire life. He took the easy way out. Married for convenience instead of love.

The problem was that Shane wasn't willing to do that. He wanted something real, like what the Pikes had. Despite only being nineteen, they knew that this is what they wanted for the rest of their lives. Shane wanted whoever he ended up with to have that same level of certainty about him. To know that he would never get bored of them, and that he would never stray or fall out of love.

“Is something wrong,” Shane asked after no one said anything.

“No, no, nothing's wrong,” Hayden assured. “We just didn't realize that you had already met someone.”

“We just don't want you to get hurt,” Jackie said gently.

It was sweet of them to worry. Though it was not the correct aspect of Shane's current romantic situation that they needed to worry about.

Hayden and Jackie were right, Shane was lonely. But it's not because he didn't have enough love in his life, it's because he had too much. He had so much love bubbling in his chest that his heart was drowning in it. He was carrying around the weight of so much love for one person, and all he wanted more than anything was to give it to him.

There were a million and one reasons why what Shane and Ilya were doing was stupid and dangerous and destined to end in misery. But Shane couldn't help but keep going back. No matter how hopeless it was and the fact that it could never work out between them.

Shane didn't want to ruin their nice dinner with his problems.

"I'm fine," Shane said. "It's my choice to keep things casual. I can handle myself. I'm not a baby."

No one at that table, including Shane, was entirely convinced by that statement.

"We know you're not," Hayden said, seemingly realizing that they had overstepped.

"Let's talk about you guys," Shane moved the conversation to a new topic. "How's married life?" He turned his attention to Jackie. "Are you sick of living with him yet?"

The mood at the table lightened as they began discussing Hayden's annoying domestic habits from improperly sorting laundry to forgetting to take out the trash. Shane knew from experience that Hayden wasn't the easiest roommate. But then again, neither was Shane, with his rigorous chore schedule and strict rules about how often linens needed to be changed (because you can never be too careful about bedbugs).

"Almost," Jackie joked.

“Hey!” Hayden pouted and crossed his arms.

“Kidding,” Jackie lightly touched Hayden’s bicep. “I think I’ll keep him.”

“You say it like I’m the family dog.”

Shane almost laughed. “Yeah, how is Gus?”

“Amazing,” Jackie beamed. “He’s happy his parents are married now.”

She gave Hayden an admiring glance. The kind of glance that felt impossibly sweet and yet also, somehow, charged. It was the kind of glance that you waited your whole life for someone to give you across a crowded room. For someone to look at you like you were made for them.

That's when it finally started to sink in for Shane. They were really married. At nineteen. Hayden was a dad... to a puppy, but still. That was a big commitment. Almost as big a commitment as marriage.

Being around Hayden and Jackie, soaking in the calmness of their new life, made Shane yearn for something like that. Something simple.

He had never felt passion for anyone like he felt for Ilya. But Shane wanted more than passion. More than anything, Shane desired to live a normal, happy life, with someone stable and loyal.

Wouldn't it be amazing if he could have both?

Shane had an amazing life. He had supportive, loving parents, wonderful friends that he cherished, and a promising future. He had innate talents that he was born with, and a work ethic that made up the rest. It felt greedy to ask for more. Something in his life had to give.

But he wanted it all. He wanted the fame and the recognition and the talent and the friendships and he wanted all of it with Ilya.

He was so so so fucked.

Shane felt his phone buzz in his jacket pocket. After an unreasonable amount of notifications in quick succession, he pulled it out to check who was so insistent on reaching him.

As he should have expected, Ilya was asking him to come over. There was no apology or explanation. Maybe he was waiting to do it in person. Or maybe he was hoping that Shane would forget how to speak in Ilya's presence like he often did.

Ilya had a lot of explaining to do after what happened yesterday, and Shane was dead-set on having an actual conversation - with their clothes on this time.

Without even realizing he was doing it, Shane smiled down at the screen.

“Is that him,” Jackie asked curiously.

When Shane didn’t answer right away, Hayden went with it.

“Oh shit, it totally is! Jackie, look at him.”

He sounded like a kid in a candy store. He was practically jumping out of his seat with glee over catching Shane in a lie.

"I'm looking," Jackie acknowledged. "And I do believe that our Shane is blushing. Are you seriously sexting him right in front of us?"

"Stop it," Shane objected. "I'm not doing anything. It's nobody."

"What's his name," Jackie asked excitedly.

"Nothing."

"He must have a name." Jackie cocked an eyebrow. "Come on, you can at least tell us that."

Shane fired off a quick text agreeing to meet Ilya when he was done with his friends, but didn't nail down a concrete time to meet. Then before any other texts could come through, Shane held down the power button and powered down his phone entirely.

"There, are you happy now? It's off."

Hayden booed. "No fun."

"Sorry," Shane said.

"I think it's sweet that you want to keep him a secret," Jackie gushed. "It's pretty romantic, don't you think?"

Hayden scrunched up his face.

"No, it's weird," he disagreed.

Jackie rolled her eyes.

For dessert, they split an ice cream sundae three ways. Shane mostly abstained since he found it impossible to ignore how unsanitary it was to eat ice cream out of the same bowl.

Once they reached the point in the evening when Jackie and Hayden started to feed each other, Shane took that as his cue to get the check.

He excused himself from the table and settled the tab while Jackie and Hayden made out in full view of the rest of the restaurant goers. It must have been some kind of health code violation.

By the time he returned, Jackie and Hayden were both on their phones.

“Where were you,” Jackie asked as Shane pulled out his chair. “Texting your mystery man.”

“No,” Shane denied. “And you guys should really cut it out because people are trying to still eat here.”

"We're allowed to kiss, we're married," Jackie said.

“Yeah, if your wife looked like this, you’d do the same thing,” Hayden said.

Shane shook his head at the incorrectness of that statement.

“I have to go soon,” Shane announced.

Jackie and Hayden exchanged a knowing look before Jackie burst into a fit of giggles at Shane's expense.

Shane was irked. "What's so funny?"

Jackie had to take a moment catch her breath. "You're going to meet that guy, aren't you? Your *booty call* guy. He texted you and now you're running off to meet him."

"It's not—" Shane couldn't deny it. "So what?"

"You are so hopeless," Hayden observed.

"Okay, I'm leaving now," Shane decided. "Everything's paid for, I'll see you guys soon."

"Thanks Shane," Jackie and Hayden said in unison.

"Yeah, yeah. It's the least I could do," Shane said.

Shane took his napkin from his lap and placed it back on the table next to his plate, before scooting his chair away and standing up.

"Make good choices," Jackie told him.

"Whatever," Shane said, already knowing full-well that he definitely would not be following that advice.

"Use protection."

Shane stealthily flipped Hayden the middle finger as he walked away from the table and went to catch his Uber.

"Ditto."

Shane mentally practiced what he was going to say during the fifteen-minute ride to Ilya's apartment. By the time he was in the lobby, he had almost a full script prepared.

He was going to tell Ilya that he should have texted him yesterday to check on him. That he should have made sure that Shane was okay after what transpired.

But when Ilya opened the door to his apartment, Shane's mind went blank.

"H-Hi," Shane said, his breath catching in his throat at the sight of Ilya shirtless.

"There you are," Ilya said. "I thought you got lost or something."

He took Shane's coat and attempted to kiss him, which Shane reluctantly allowed for a couple seconds before twisting away.

Shane had something to say... even though he couldn't quite remember what it was.

"Do you have something you want to say to me," Shane asked, more whiny than he would have liked.

Ilya barely reacted. “Should I?”

“Yes,” Shane said.

“Did I do something wrong,” Ilya asked.

“I don’t know, did you?”

Ilya furrowed a brow, clearly oblivious to what Shane was getting at.

“What’s wrong, sweetheart?”

Hearing that word broke almost every last piece of Shane’s fragile resolve.

“Nothing,” Shane said. “I just thought you’d be more apologetic after yesterday.”

Yesterday was a total fucking nightmare. After Svetlana left his office, they had fucked madly on the couch. Which was a first, since they had never actually had full sex in his Ilya’s office before. It was also how Shane happened to learn that Ilya, apparently, kept a reserve of lube at his place of work, which Shane would have harped on more if he wasn’t so horny that he was legally out of his mind.

It was by far the roughest sex they’d had in their short courtship. Shane rode him while Ilya held his hand over Shane’s mouth to stop him from screaming his name. As he came, Shane told Ilya that he loved him, and then swore that he hated him just as much.

The whole thing lasted less than six minutes. Afterwards, Shane had stormed out, still angry from their earlier fight. It didn’t occur to him until after he left that they didn’t kiss once the entire time.

Ilya didn't attempt to contact Shane that night or most of the next day, instead choosing to give him the space to process everything. But space wasn't what Shane needed. He'd had two weeks of interrupted space. Of being alone with his thoughts.

He didn't want space, he wanted Ilya.

They only had five more weeks together, that was only thirty-five days, and Shane wasn't planning on wasting any of them being angry with each other. And besides, they could hate each other and still have amazing sex.

"Why didn't you text me last night," Shane asked.

"I thought you were mad at me," Ilya said, rightfully.

"I was," Shane admitted. "But that didn't mean that I didn't want you to text me."

Ilya's eyebrows drew together. "You see how that is confusing?"

Shane seized Ilya's collar and pulled him a couple inches down to Shane's height so that he could meet his gaze. "You don't get to stop talking to me," Shane apprised him. "Even if I ignore you. Don't ever do that again. I'm serious."

Ilya brought Shane into a suffocating kiss. Their tongues danced, fitting perfectly together. Then Shane licked his lips and tasted the faint linger of cigarettes.

Ilya started tugging at the bottom of Shane's shirt, practically ripping it as he pulled it over his head.

Before the shirt even hit the floor, Ilya's lips were back on Shane's.

“Wait, slow down,” Shane said.

“Why?” Ilya had a disturbing look in his eyes. He seemed almost desperate. Usually Shane was the one that was eager, and he didn’t know he felt about the role reversal.

“Are you okay,” Shane asked. “You seem...”

“Horny,” Ilya suggested.

“Yeah, of course, but also...” *Needy. Anxious.* “Are you sure you’re okay?”

Ilya stared at Shane’s chest, marvelling at him.

“I would be better if you were naked.”

“Ilya,” Shane protested, as Ilya’s lips attached themselves to Shane’s neck. “Do you want to talk?”

“That is the last thing I want to do.”

Shane kissed him back, finally letting his thoughts go and just being present in the moment.

Ilya trailed kisses along Shane’s neck. He whispered in Shane’s ear. “I jerked off thinking about you last night.”

Shane stiffened. That was new.

In the past, Ilya had never told him anything about his sex life. And although Shane wasn't entirely sure that masturbation counted as part of one's actual sex life, it was still another peek behind the curtain of Ilya Rozanov that made Shane feel closer to him.

"You did?"

"Yes."

Shane hesitated.

"Was it good?"

"It was amazing," Ilya said, digging his fingers into Shane's ass. "Not as good as this though."

Shane couldn't help but pry for more details.

"You were just thinking about me? You weren't watching something?"

"No," Ilya said. "Just thinking about us having sex."

Ilya scattered light kisses along Shane's jawbone up to his ear.

"And that made you come?"

"Yes."

“Which time?”

Ilya pulled away, annoyed by Shane’s sudden foray into investigative journalism.

“What do you mean,” he asked, snippily.

“You were thinking about us having sex,” Shane said. “Which time were you thinking about?”

Ilya smiled in a way that made Shane’s stomach flutter before answering. “The first time.”

Their first time. Which also happened to be Shane’s first time with a man.

“Remember how eager you were,” Ilya said, making Shane blush. “How ready you were. You told me exactly what you wanted, and you got it.”

Shane felt a creeping sense of embarrassment begin to fog his brain. He was so eager back then that Ilya nearly got him off with the sound of his voice alone.

“You liked that,” Shane asked, as if he didn’t already know.

“I fucking loved it,” Ilya declared.

Tiny goosebumps took shape on the exterior of Shane’s arms.

Shane had gotten used to their dynamic of Ilya being the teacher and guiding Shane through new experiences. It was comfortable. Easy.

But Shane had noticed that Ilya seemed to like it when he occasionally took charge. And Shane wondered if right now Ilya needed a break from always being in control. Maybe Ilya needed to be pulled out of his head sometimes too.

“And when you were jerking off, did you wish that I was there with you?”

“Yes,” Ilya said, looking at Shane like he was precious. “I always wish you were here.”

Shane might as well have melted into a puddle of happiness on the floor.

“Well I’m here now,” Shane noted. “Do you want my help?”

The crease in Ilya’s forehead became deeper. When he didn’t get the hint, Shane ran a firm hand over his crotch and Ilya bucked at Shane’s touch.

“Bedroom,” Shane said, clear and unequivocal.

Ilya attached his lips to Shane’s again as he maneuvered them through the hallway and into the bedroom.

Ilya threw himself on the bed and Shane climbed on top of him, grinding against him and nearly getting lost in the moment before remembering what he was there to do.

“Lie down,” Shane instructed. “I want to take care of you. Will you let me do that?”

As an answer, Ilya put the back of his head on the pillow and shut his eyes, listening to the sounds of Shane getting ready.

Shane opened the drawer to the bedside table and fumbled around for the bottle of lube. When he found it, he had to shake it a few times before some finally squeezed out onto his palm. He made a mental note to tell Ilya to refill it in the next couple of days.

He squeezed the meat of Ilya's chest, before tugging at the hem of Ilya's black sweatpants.

"Take these off."

Ilya opened his eyes, lifted his hips off the bed and lowered his pants and boxers.

"I thought you were taking care of me," Ilya said, with a small smirk. He kicked his pants off the bed and they landed silently on the floor.

Shane felt his saliva coalesce under his tongue when he saw Ilya's dick, already hard, standing at attention.

There was nothing more that Shane wanted more than to have Ilya inside him. But that would mean stopping. It would mean preparation. It would mean pulling the focus away from Ilya's pleasure.

He reminded himself that this was not about him, it was about Ilya. At that moment, Ilya needed to relinquish control. Shane could find his own orgasm later.

"I *am* taking care of you," Shane said. "Do you want me to stop?"

There was no answer.

Shane positioned himself on his side next to Ilya, with his free arm resting on the pillow behind Ilya's head. He wrapped his fingers around Ilya's shaft and dragged his hand upwards, circling his thumb over the tip.

“Is this how you did it,” Shane asked for clarity. “Last night.”

Ilya nodded and choked back a moan.

“Did you use lube?”

“Yeah.”

Shane kept talking Ilya through it, savouring the small noises he elicited or the way Ilya’s mouth twitched involuntarily when Shane happened to graze a particularly sensitive spot.

He wanted to give Ilya that exact feeling over and over until it was too much.

“Is it as good as you imagined?”

“Better,” Ilya answered. “God, Shane. You feel— fuck.”

Shane rewarded Ilya with a kiss on his forehead.

“You look so hot right now,” Shane told him, gliding his slicked-up hand up and down at a moderate pace, working his way up to full speed. “I love you so much. I can’t wait to have you in me.”

Ilya let out a small grunt, and Shane felt weirdly proud about how little time this was going to take.

“So close,” Ilya panted, confirming Shane’s suspicion. “Keep going.”

Ilya's breathing became less measured and more erratic as he got closer to the edge and Shane knew that they didn't have much time.

"Yeah? You gonna come for me?"

The answer was yes. Ilya was aggressively thrusting into Shane's grip with his eyes still closed. Shane couldn't help but get some form of perverse pleasure from seeing what he had reduced the strong six-foot-three man to.

"You want my come, sweetheart?"

"I want it so bad," Shane said in his best sultry voice, trying to be encouraging without rushing him. "Give it to me, I'm ready."

Ilya slammed his left hand down on Shane's thigh, squeezing him tightly as his orgasm became inevitable. Shane's eyes couldn't help but fixate on the sight of Ilya's wedding ring staring back at him, taunting him.

"I don't care that you're married," Shane said, tightening his grip and stroking faster. "You belong to me. Remember that. You're fucking *mine*. This dick is *mine*. This is all *mine*."

Shane's *you belong to me*, brought Ilya tumbling over the cliff. He came intensely, firing out in waves, coating Shane's hand and dribbling onto his stomach. It was a lot more than Shane was used to.

Ilya's back flew up off the mattress and slammed back down again like Shane had exorcised a demon from his body.

Jesus.

“More,” Shane demanded as it kept spilling out of him. “I want all of it. Come on, I wanna see it.”

He continued stroking with a ruthless tenacity until a few seconds later when Ilya grabbed his arm and forced him to stop.

“Holy shit,” Ilya said, an inch from Shane’s face.

Once Ilya returned to this astral plane, Shane became self-conscious all of a sudden.

“Really, it was okay?”

Even Shane could hear how ridiculous that sounded as his drenched hand was dripping semen.

Without any warning, Ilya gripped the back of Shane’s neck and pulled him into a sweaty, passionate kiss. Neither of them broke away to come up for air for several seconds.

“I love you so much,” Ilya said softly.

Shane’s face was split in half by a satisfied smile.

“That good, huh?”

He lifted his sticky digits in the air and presented them like he had just completed a difficult magic trick.

“Yeah, that fucking good,” he confirmed. “Fuck. How did you get so good at that?”

“You taught me everything I know,” Shane joked.

He placed a soft kiss on Ilya's temple.

Ilya laughed dryly. “I needed that.”

“I could tell,” Shane said, gripping Ilya’s rough curls with his clean hand. “You seemed kind of stressed.”

“Not anymore.”

“It was really hot,” Shane said, pressing his lips to Ilya’s again.

They smiled at each other for a moment, until Shane said, “Can I have like a tissue or something?”

“Oh, right” Ilya said, lightly chuckling. “On the dresser.”

Shane leapt from the bed and grabbed the three-quarters full box of Kleenex. He dried his hand and then removed the excess that had missed Shane’s fingers and landed on Ilya’s belly.

When they were as clean as they were going to get, they settled in on the bed and cuddled.

“I’m tired,” Ilya announced as Shane tossed the tissues on the side table. “I feel like I am going to sleep ten hours tonight.”

“I’m happy you’re feeling better,” Shane said, nuzzling Ilya’s neck.

“You make me feel better.”

He was giving Shane too much credit.

“Look I’m glad I could help, but I’m not going to do this for you every time you’re stressed out,” Shane informed him. “I have limits.”

“Really,” Ilya asked. “I have not found them yet.”

“Shut up,” Shane said, with zero bite. “Turn out the light.”

Ilya’s face lit up like he wasn’t expecting Shane to want to sleep there.

“You’re staying?”

“Do you want me to leave,” Shane asked, implying the answer he wanted Ilya to provide. “Because I don’t really feel like going anywhere right now.”

Ilya brought his hands around the back of Shane’s neck and brought him in for a kiss. He held Shane’s jaw in place the entire time.

He pulled away what felt like an eternity later.

“Does that answer your question?”

Shane nodded.

“Good,” Shane said, already making moves to get more comfortable. “I’m gonna pass out any minute. Plus you kind of owe me after that.”

“I’ll make it up to you tomorrow,” Ilya promised.

“You better,” Shane said, half-serious.

Ilya switched off the light and lay down on his back with Shane resting his head on Ilya’s bare chest.

Shane breathed in Ilya’s earthy aroma as the weight of sleep fell over them both.

“Love you,” Shane mumbled into Ilya’s chest as his eyes fluttered shut.

“Love you too. Goodnight.”

Chapter End Notes

i know not a ton of plot happened but sometimes smut has to take priority (sorry not sorry)

there was going to be another scene but i wanted to leave them on a happy note because it might take me some time to write the next chapter

subscribe for more and see you next time 

Chapter 20: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey!

so i lied and it didn't take me as long to write this chapter as i originally thought... oops

there's over 400 of you subscribed!! i know it's late but hopefully some of you are still awake :)

ilya pov chapters are always a fun treat for me. without giving too much away, i think that this chapter is where he finally starts to wake up to how reckless his actions have actually been.

there is a bit of time jumping around in this chapter with the different pov's so hopefully it all makes sense!

****content warning for a brief mention of ilya's mother's death in this chapter**

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

Ilya was sitting at his kitchen table with his head in his hands when Svetlana came home early that morning.

He was dreading having to face her after what she walked in on the day before. But when he saw her, she was content to ignore the issue entirely.

“Hey,” she greeted him. She had a fresh glow that Rozanov recognized from the many mornings she had returned after nights spent away. “I’m just going to hop in the shower real quick and then I’ll give you a ride if you want?”

Ilya delayed his response. “No need, I already cancelled my classes for today. There’s a bug going around.”

Svetlana put her purse down on the chair and painted a concerned look on her face as she sauntered over to him.

She placed the back of her hand to Ilya's forehead. "You're not warm," she observed. "And you were fine yesterday when I saw you."

Ilya glared at her.

"Oh," Svetlana said when she realized. "You're still upset about that?"

Ilya shrugged dramatically. "Why would I be upset, Sveta?" He began listing off a number of reasons. "Because you walked into my office without asking? Because you invaded my privacy?"

"Excuse me," Svetlana fought back. "You can't be mad at me when you were the one who didn't lock the door," she pointed out. "You're lucky it was me and not one of your students. You shouldn't be fucking undergrads in your office, anyway. It's like you're begging to get caught."

He didn't appreciate the way Svetlana was looking down on him. He could only imagine how angry she would be if she ever found out that he visited Shane's dorm.

"Calm down Ms. Perfect," Ilya chastised. "I know you were with someone last night."

"She's not a student Ilya," she argued.

"You have fucked students before," Ilya pointed out her hypocrisy.

Svetlana shook her head, in disbelief that her husband would speak to her that way.

"You need to be more careful, for both our sakes," she berated him. "If anything happens to you, our names are tied together. They will start to look into me."

"I know," Ilya agreed. "I am being careful."

"You call what happened yesterday being careful?"

"It was a one time thing," Ilya lied.

"I refuse to let you be the reason that my career goes up in flames," Svetlana informed him.

Ilya was exhausted by this topic. He didn't want to fight with his wife, especially this early in the morning.

"I am sorry being married to me is such a terrible burden," Ilya said, dripping with self-pity. "You should have left me a long time ago."

Svetlana crossed her arms, before descending from her perch to talk to Ilya on his level.

"You are never a burden," Svetlana said clearly. "I'm just tired of dealing with the fallout of your stupid decisions."

"When have any of my decisions ever affected you," Ilya nearly shouted. "You have never cared what I do."

Svetlana's lips curved into an uncomfortable smile. Svetlana was a strong woman who could hold her own in an argument, but that didn't mean that she would tolerate being spoken to in such a manner. Ilya hardly ever raised his voice, and never to his wife.

"Does yelling make you feel powerful," she asked, derisively. "Do you feel better after taking your anger out on me?"

Ilya slumped his body over the table. "I'm sorry," he apologized. "You don't deserve that."

"I'm not your punching bag," Svetlana said. "I'm your wife. Treat me like it."

"Forgive me," Ilya said with a slight pout which Svetlana did not seem to find cute.

She studied his face, perhaps looking for evidence of genuine remorse. A few seconds later, she arched her back and leaned across the table. Ilya pushed himself off his chair slightly and met her in the middle for a kiss.

"This boy really did a number on you," Svetlana observed. "I can't remember the last time I saw you this depressed."

Ilya scoffed. "I'm not depressed."

He had never been able to hide anything from her. She knew him too well.

"Just drop it, please."

"No," Svetlana refused. "I'm the only person looking out for you. If people find out, nothing will happen to him, but you will be finished. Blacklisted. No one will ever work with you again."

Ilya made his demand harsher. "I said, drop it."

"No," Svetlana doubled-down. "I am not going to let you ruin your life over this boy."

“He’s not ruining my life,” Ilya argued.

“Not yet. But he will if you let him.”

"He's nineteen," Ilya argued. "He's not some evil mastermind."

"That makes it worse," Svetlana said. "He's young, he probably thinks you're in love or something. This is going to end badly."

Ilya's stomach dropped at her mention of love.

Svetlana softened her expression. “I don’t want you to get hurt,” she said. “You think you're invincible, but you’re not. You’re just really lucky.”

“I am *not* lucky,” Ilya fought back. “I have never been lucky.”

“You *are* lucky,” Svetlana said. “The fact that you are where you are today, makes you lucky. If you can’t see that, then you’re a fool. Do you think I didn't see how you looked at him,” she said. “I was standing there for ten seconds before you even noticed I was there. I’m not telling you to stop seeing him. Just please be more careful about it when you do.”

Ilya was tired of having to be careful. He was bored of sneaking around and hiding his feelings. Secrecy had become like second nature to him. For once, he wanted to be out in the open.

“Sometimes I think you want to get caught,” Svetlana said.

The obvious implication filled the empty space between them. The air in the room became heavier with everything unsaid.

Seeing that she was getting nothing out of him, Svetlana put her hands up in frustration.

"I'm going to go shower and then I'm going to work," Svetlana declared. "You should try it sometime."

Ilya spent the rest of the afternoon alternating between sleep and staring at a blank computer screen. The cursor blinked against the white space, but he couldn't bring himself to write. He tried to get work done. He tried to keep his mind occupied with anything other than Shane. But it was no use.

Shane loved him.

He couldn't believe it. Shane loved him.

He couldn't deny it to himself anymore.

After marrying Svetlana, Ilya naturally assumed that he would never fall in love again. That part of his life was meant to be over from that day forward. Sex was different. He could do that with anyone. But his love was supposed to be reserved for only one person.

Ilya wasn't some lovesick teenager. He could compartmentalize his feelings better than almost anyone else he knew. That's how he knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he *loved* Shane. Regardless of how stupid that sounded when Ilya really thought about it.

Ilya knew that he shouldn't have let himself say it. He told himself that it just slipped out. That he regretted it immediately. Not because it wasn't true, but because it would make it so much harder for him to end things. Even though Shane seemed to accept fate in the moment, Ilya knew well enough that there was no way that Shane was going to walk away without a fight.

But the fact that they were in love didn't change reality. No one else would understand the connection that they shared. They would assume that Ilya brainwashed Shane. They would say that Shane was an unwitting participant in Ilya's deranged fantasy. They would create their own false narrative and cast Ilya and Shane to play the parts.

Ilya would be ruined. They both would be. The scandal would follow them for the rest of their lives.

Of course, Ilya was scared for what that would mean for him, for Svetlana, and the life they had built together over the past sixteen years. But truthfully, he was more afraid about what it would mean for Shane's life.

He caved around 7:30 p.m. and texted Shane to come over and talk.

Ilya woke up the next morning to Shane on top of him, staring down at him, unnervingly.

He wasn't moving or even blinking. He was just watching Ilya sleep.

How long had he been doing that, Ilya wondered.

"You're awake," Ilya noted.

"I've been awake for twenty minutes," Shane elaborated. He shifted his weight slightly. Ilya was still naked, but Shane was in his boxers, and he could feel Shane's hard dick rubbing against his stomach.

“You looked so peaceful,” Shane explained. “I didn’t want to wake you. But I do have to go soon.”

“When,” Ilya asked, contemplating how many times he could unravel Shane in the limited time they had together.

“Soon,” Shane repeated. “I wanted to have sex before I left, but I had to wait for you to wake up first. And now I don’t think we have time.”

Suddenly Ilya was wishing he’d woken up twenty minutes ago.

“I can be quick,” Ilya said, making Shane throw his head back and laugh.

“What if I don’t want it to be quick?”

Ilya didn’t want it to be quick either. He wanted to take Shane apart until he forgot his own name. He wanted to repay him for last night.

“Where are you running off to this morning?”

“Practice,” Shane answered. “I can’t be late.”

Ilya ran a finger across the outline of Shane’s waistband.

“You can be a little late though, right?”

“Nope,” Shane disagreed, leaving no wiggle room for Ilya to exploit. Then Shane dipped his head for a kiss, and as he pulled away he said, “Well... I might have a couple minutes. But then I really have to go.”

As he was receiving this truly excellent blowjob, Ilya was rarely able to string together cohesive thoughts. But when his brain was capable of latching onto something, he contemplated what he must have done in a past life to be deserving of this. Of Shane's mouth on him. Of having Shane in his bed.

He still couldn't believe that Shane had forgiven him. At least, it seemed like he forgave him.

How am I supposed to let you go?

"I don't want you to leave," Ilya said.

There were two distinct meanings behind that statement. Ilya didn't want Shane to leave his apartment that morning and go to practice, but more importantly, he wasn't ready to face their inevitable separation when the semester was over.

Shane, thankfully, was ignoring whatever confessions happened to inadvertently slip out of Ilya's lips.

Shane's hand crept up Ilya's thigh, holding him in place, and Ilya's hand came down and intertwined the tips of his fingers with Shane's.

Shane suddenly stopped, unlocked his hand from Ilya's and sat upright on the bed.

He held up Ilya's hand by his ring finger.

"Take it off," Shane demanded. "Or I stop."

He let Ilya's cock snap back against his stomach, still aching for contact.

Ilya resisted the urge to chuckle at Shane's boldness. Over the past week, Shane's jealousy had grown exponentially. Really it had been rising ever since Svetlana had walked in on them together.

The ring was fairly tight, but after a couple twists, he was able to slide the ring off his finger with relative ease.

He set it carefully atop the wood of the side table.

"Okay? It is off now. You can keep going."

"Is it going to stay off?"

Ilya had never been interrogated during a blowjob before. He doubted it was very common but admittedly, if there was a time to bargain with him for the best outcome, it would be when he was seconds away from orgasm.

"For now," Ilya wagered. "Yes."

Shane still wasn't convinced to continue. He wrapped a hand around Ilya's cock and brought it to his lips. He swiped his tongue over the slit, collecting the pre-come, and then just kept holding it by the base while meeting Ilya's gaze.

"You can wear it when I'm not around," Shane made new terms. "But I don't want to see it again. Especially not when we're doing this. it makes me feel like... like..."

"Like what?"

"Slutty," Shane said.

Ilya couldn't help but smile at that description while Shane was fondling him.

"You don't want to be a slut," Ilya asked, gently grazing Shane's cheek. "But you're so good at it?"

Shane frowned.

"If you ever touch me again while you're wearing that thing, I'll cut it off myself."

Ilya had to make a stupid joke.

"The ring or my finger?"

He wasn't exactly sure why he was so intent on giving Shane more ideas on how to punish him for wearing his wedding ring.

Shane's answer was uncharacteristically violent. "Just don't do it and then you won't have to find out."

"That's a little much, don't you think?"

"How do you think I feel," Shane asked, making a valid point. "I don't like being reminded that you're married to someone else."

It had never bothered him in the past. If it did, he had never shown it until now.

“You said you didn’t care I was married,” Ilya recalled.

“Well maybe I do,” Shane easily admitted. “Now shut up so I can get you off.”

Ilya refrained from drawing attention to the fact that Shane was the one who wanted to have an entire conversation while Ilya was still hard.

Once he started up again, Shane’s head movements were quick and sloppy and exactly what Ilya needed. He wasn’t trying to impress him with any real technique, he was literally just trying to make him finish as fast as possible. And that was really hot.

Ilya heard the beautiful sound of his cock tapping against the back of Shane’s throat over and over. Shane’s cheeks were hollowed as he sucked and his eyes were determined.

Shane changed tactics, leaving only his tongue on the head and stroking Ilya’s dick into his mouth. He sank his mouth back down and kept sucking for a few seconds until Ilya’s thighs were shaking and hips were attempting to make small pathetic thrusts.

He had already started to come when at the last second, Shane removed his mouth and used his hand to stroke the rest of the come onto his face and chin.

Ilya thought it was over until Shane put his mouth around him again, sucking out the remainder of his release and then promptly spitting it out onto Ilya’s once-clean stomach.

Oh my god.

If it were physically possible, the proud look on Shane’s face would have made Ilya rock hard again.

“I have to go now,” Shane casually announced. “That took longer than I thought.” It barely crossed the three-minute threshold. “Are you free tonight?”

Ilya couldn't remember if he had already made plans or not, but he would be more than ready to cancel them for a repeat performance of whatever this was.

“Yes,” Ilya managed to grit out. “Do you want a kiss,” Ilya asked. Shane usually liked some kind of affection after sex. Even if he couldn't stay and cuddle like he no doubt wanted to.

Shane took a rain check. “No, I'm all dirty. I'll just go clean up.”

Ilya nodded and Shane disappeared into the bathroom.

Shane called out from the other room. “Do you have class today,” he asked for reasons Ilya couldn't figure out.

“Yeah,” Ilya said. “This afternoon.”

Shane plopped back down on the bed. If Ilya was reading him correctly, Shane wasn't doing okay.

What possibly could have happened in the past thirty seconds?

“What's wrong?”

Shane's eyes were soft. “I don't want to have to worry about you when I leave.”

Ilya felt a pang of guilt. Shane was worried about him?

Shane should not be concerned with how Ilya was coping. Ilya was the one who should be worried about Shane. Shane was young and impressionable and in love. Ilya should be taking care of him and making sure that he's not freaking out.

Is that what this morning was all about? Taking care of him. The thought made Ilya the tiniest bit nauseous.

"Get dressed," Shane said. "You'll feel better."

"I already feel better," Ilya said. Which was partially true.

"Promise me you won't go back to sleep when I'm gone," Shane said. "Go outside and talk to people."

Ilya was desperate to end this conversation.

"Don't you have to get to practice," Ilya asked, with more animosity than Shane deserved.

The disappointment plastered across Shane's face only worsened Ilya's guilt.

"I'm sorry," Ilya said, putting a hand on Shane's shoulder, desperate for any point of contact with him.

"Stop pushing me away," Shane said, astutely. "I see what you're doing, and I won't let you. So just stop."

"Go to your practice," Ilya gave him permission to leave. "I will be fine. I am always fine."

Shane didn't seem convinced, but he also had no choice. He had to get going.

"I love you," Shane said, clearly expecting Ilya to say it back.

"I love you too. Now go," he pointed to the door. "Get out of here."

Shane finally walked out of the bedroom and then Ilya heard the front door open and close.

Ilya didn't have time to make a concrete lesson plan, but thankfully his afternoon class was a seminar for honours students, which meant that it was extremely low-key. Ilya was essentially there to moderate the students discussion, and they were all incredibly bright.

The class was scheduled for two hours but he let them leave fifteen minutes early, which seemed to make everyone happy. Including Ilya, who wanted to go straight home so that he could crawl into bed and sleep away the rest of the afternoon.

But then Marleau texted and asked Ilya to swing by his office when his class was done. The way the text was phrased didn't make it sound like the meeting was optional.

"Hey man," Marleau said, hardly looking up from his keyboard. "Come on in. Sorry for the mess."

Ilya couldn't tell what mess he was referring to. The office was very clean.

"No problem."

Ilya had never been summoned to his friend's office before, and he was feeling unsettled. He was waiting for an appropriate moment to ask him why he called him in to talk like this. Marleau wasn't his boss, and Ilya hadn't had much interaction with the graduate studies department for the past several years. Which meant that whatever Marleau had to tell him was as a friend, rather than a colleague.

But then, why was it so urgent?

"So what's up," Marleau asked, as if Ilya was the one who invited himself here.

"Nothing much," Ilya replied. He only held out three more seconds before asking, "Is everything okay?"

Marleau's mood seemed to shift, until he caught himself and adjusted.

"This is so awkward," Marleau sighed.

Shit, that wasn't good.

"You know I think you're a great guy, Roz," Marleau said, buttering him up before he stuck the knife in.

"What is going on," Ilya asked, only growing more anxious with each passing moment of not knowing. "Just tell me."

It was about Shane. Ilya could tell, it was about Shane. That's what made this so awkward.

Did Marleau even know that Ilya was bisexual? Ilya was pretty confident that he had never told him. Not in so many words anyway. Maybe he could tell.

“Obviously,” Marleau started. “I don’t care what you do in your personal life. That’s none of my business, or anyone else’s, as far as I’m concerned.”

Ilya nodded hesitantly. “Okay,” he said with a slight edge to his tone. “Thank you.”

“But there are some people who don’t feel that way,” Marleau stuck the landing.

“Like who?” Ilya asked the next logical follow-up question. Was there some secret meeting that took place where they all took a vote on the ethics of Ilya’s sex life?

“You know I can’t tell you that.”

“Why not,” Ilya asked. What was the purpose of this meeting if not to give him a heads up before he was symbolically castrated for his actions?

“Come on, Roz,” Marleau said. “Don’t make me say it.”

His brain was humming with a panic he was desperately trying to keep at bay. He didn’t even know how bad this was yet. He needed to retain some semblance of composure.

“Say it,” Ilya encouraged. “I do not want to talk around it. I have had sex with a few students. That is not illegal.”

The names of each one of his students flashed before his eyes. There were at least ten, Ilya estimated.

Becca, Katie, Arielle, Emma, Tess, Josh, Sarah, Jessica, Mark, Shane.

Was that all of them?

No, it wasn't. There were at least two others whose names escaped his mind.

He had never actually counted before. Ilya genuinely had no idea how many people he had slept with in his life. Close to sixty. Or eighty. Probably not more than a hundred. Definitely not more than two hundred. But if he actually had to give an exact number, or recite each one of their names, that would be a problem.

"Jesus Roz," Marleau said, rubbing his forehead. Why was *he* so stressed out? It's not like being a pervert was contagious. "That can't leave this room."

Ilya wondered when the social tidal wave had begun to shift. When did professors fucking students become such a huge deal? When he was a student, it was fairly common. It was almost expected that it would happen from time to time. Back then, people managed to be adults about it. They didn't cry when relationships failed, they just picked themselves back up and moved on. They respected the experience for what it was and didn't pretend like it was something else.

Ilya would not be able to admit this to himself, but he felt a great deal of resentment over what other people were capable of claiming was "traumatic" in their lives. In his mind, Ilya had been through *real* trauma. The death of his mother at such an impressionable age had scarred him throughout adulthood. The day he lost her, Ilya ceased being a child. He was no longer allowed the freedom that other children had, to be free, to be playful, to not have real problems.

Ilya's relationships with students were on the opposite end of the trauma spectrum. Consensual sex between two adults could not possibly be traumatic.

That's what Ilya told himself, at least.

"Are you seriously telling me that you've never done it," Ilya asked. There was no way Marleau had never dipped his toe in the pool at least once or twice.

“Yes,” Marleau said instantly, sounding absolutely horrified. “I have never,” he lowered his voice in horror, “had sex with a student.”

Ilya wasn't expecting that explosive a response. It made him feel like he was the bad guy.

Obviously, Ilya knew that he was more selfish than a lot of people. He could be reckless with other people's feelings and disregard their emotions. But he never purposefully hurt anyone. He would never do that. He wasn't evil, just self-centred.

“There's only so much that you can ask them to ignore,” Marleau offered his advice. “Just cool off for a while, you know? Wait until this all blows over.”

There was now a total of two people that had chosen to insult Ilya's morals today. They were looking down on him like some kind of freak, when in reality, they were just as bad as he was.

Did he think that Ilya had forgotten the time approximately a year ago when they picked up a woman at a bar and took turns with her at Marleau's apartment? But Ilya was the only one who deserved to be admonished?

“How many people know,” Ilya asked.

Marleau's response provided no help.

“A few people.”

“Like...” Ilya waited for a real answer.

“More than you'd think,” Marleau said. “I guess there was some argument the other day between two students. Apparently, things got heated, and at one point your name was mentioned.”

Ilya was stumped. Two students were fighting over him?

He had been so careful not to leave any loose ends. He left things on good terms with Mark. They parted ways amicably. Ilya even wrote him a letter of reference for his graduate applications. He was an excellent student. Mark had moved on easily.

Or maybe Ilya had only thought he had.

Jessica was another recent graduate of Ilya's extracurricular program. A sweet, introverted girl with a passion for Russian literature.

She had quite a passion for many things, as it turned out.

The last time Ilya saw her, she was in his apartment, pulling her dress over her slender frame. She was running off to meet her friends. They had mutually agreed to break things off. She didn't seem sad. She didn't shed any tears.

None of his students would want to hurt him. This whole thing was a witch hunt.

"Two students were fighting about me," Ilya clarified. He wanted to ensure that he understood what Marleau was saying correctly.

Marleau nodded. "I guess, yeah. I'm sorry Roz, that's all they told me. If I knew more, I would tell you."

"Why were they fighting about me?"

Ilya spoke those words out loud but mostly for his own benefit.

“Hell, if I know,” Marleau said, looking like he needed a smoke. Ilya thoughtfully retrieved his cigarettes and lighter from his jacket pocket and offered them to Marleau.

“I shouldn’t,” Marleau said. But he took one anyway, and the lighter.

Ilya was lost in his thoughts, making a mental spreadsheet of all the people who had it out for him.

“How’s Svetlana doing,” Marleau asked, blowing a cloud of smoke in the direction of the slightly cracked window.

Now Ilya was the one who needed a cigarette.

“She is fine,” Ilya said casually. “Same as usual. Beautiful, funny, brilliant.”

"Way too good for you," Marleau joked.

Ilya did not know how to respond appropriately to what Marleau had said.

“She’s the best,” Ilya said. He meant it. Svetlana had been the most consistent person in his life since he was twelve years old.

Ilya's phone began to buzz in his pants.

"You need to take that," Marleau asked.

Ilya reached into his pocket and fished out his phone.

Why the hell was Shane calling him in the middle of the day? A text maybe, but why call him?

"No," Ilya said. He gestured to put his phone away, when he saw his phone light up with a text from Shane.

why aren't you answering your phone?

need to talk to you

Ilya's thumb hovered over the message, before swiping left. He typed in his six-digit password and the screen opened. He wrote his reply.

when can you meet?

Five seconds later, Shane texted back.

now - at your apartment. i'm outside.

"You okay Roz?"

Ilya leapt out of his chair as if his legs had a mind of their own.

"I have to go."

He left so quickly he forgot his cigarettes were still on the desk.

Chapter End Notes

cliffhanger!!!

what do you think happened?? let me know in the comments (or just leave a comment about literally anything) :)

Chapter 21: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey!

there are now 420 of you subscribed (lol) and i seriously love y'all!!

this is another late night update from me.

some of you guessed that ben was going to make an appearance and its time to find out if you were right! (spoiler: you were). there is a mention of sexual blackmail in this chapter and even though it is ultimately a misunderstanding, i still thought i would warn you upfront before you read it.

i live on compliments so say nice things in the comments and leave kudos and all that other stuff :)

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

After spending the previous night and a decent part of that morning at Ilya's apartment, Shane had to go back to his dorm to get his workout bag before booking it across campus to get to practice on time.

Even though Ilya had assured him that he was okay, Shane knew that there was something he wasn't telling him. He probably should have insisted that they talk last night, but instead he caved almost instantly, like he always did. And then he did it again that morning. He was definitely giving Ilya the wrong idea. He wasn't a sex toy and he shouldn't let himself be used like one.

Shane threw his mouthguard and water bottle into his bag as quickly as humanly possible. Then he popped a mint to cover his morning breath. He had forgotten to brush his teeth, which meant that his teeth felt fuzzy, which was sure to bother him for the rest of the morning. But he didn't have three minutes to spare.

He was rushing out of his room and had just turned the corner when he knocked into what felt like a brick wall. Except that it wasn't a brick wall, it was a man. Shane's chin collided with the guy's forehead.

He dropped his bag onto the floor.

“Oh my god are you okay?” Shane asked the question before he could see the face of the person he collided with. “I didn't see you. Fuck, I'm sorry.”

Then he saw the man's stupidly sexy wavy hair and did a double take.

Fucking Ben.

“Jesus, what are you doing here?”

Ben's dorm was nowhere near Shane's.

“Well hello to you too,” Ben said, rubbing his thumb over his forehead where Shane's chin bruised him.

“I swear didn't see you,” Shane said.

“Obviously,” Ben said, in his usual condescending tone. “Were you ever going to tell me where you've been the past couple days?”

“Probably not,” Shane said. “Is that a problem? I thought you and I were just casual.”

“Sort of,” Ben clarified. “I was worried about you. You didn't text me back.”

Ben was worried about him. The thought that Ben cared what he was doing sent a chill down Shane's spine. Ben shouldn't care where Shane was. That's not what casual fuck buddies, ex-

fuck buddies, are supposed to do for each other.

"I didn't realize I had to text you back," Shane said.

He needed to tread very carefully here. If this morning's run-in had proven anything, it was that Shane would need to get used to seeing Ben around occasionally. It was his campus too, and he had just as much of a right to be there as Shane did, regardless of how it made Shane feel every time he saw him.

"I thought maybe you were dead or something."

That was a bit dramatic. Why couldn't he just admit that he was mad that he missed him? He lost his favourite toy and now he was sulking about it.

"Well, now you've seen me," Shane said, shrugging his shoulders. There was really nothing left to say.

The hardest part about this interaction for Shane was that Ben probably didn't deserve to be ghosted. Shane had just cut him off without an explanation. While they weren't exactly dating, he deserved some kind of formal send-off. He deserved for Shane to treat him like a human being, even if Ben never showed him the same courtesy.

Ben had never done anything horrible to Shane, exactly. Sure he was inconsiderate. A bit pushy. But he never did anything that Shane didn't want.

Except for the few times that Shane asked him to wear a condom and he refused, which Shane vaguely understood was really fucked up. Or when he finished inside him after he told him to pull out, which was annoying. But hey, Shane had sex without condoms sometimes, so it's not like he was practicing safe sex perfectly. Maybe he didn't have the right to ask Ben to either. And he blew him that first night without making him wear a condom, and that wasn't very safe, so maybe he thought Shane would be cool with it.

Part of Shane wished that Ben would just do something terrible to justify Shane's disdain for him. If he had done something truly horrible, then maybe Shane wouldn't have felt so bad about hating him.

In truth, Shane's body seemed to understand his feelings about Ben more clearly than his mind did. His thoughts about the situation were all jumbled and confused, but his body knew perfectly. Every jump, every recoil. Every time Shane had to scan the room for Ben before he walked into it. It told the story that Shane's brain did not want to listen to. His body had already solved that mystery, and it was trying its best to protect him.

To Shane's endless frustration and humiliation, he did kind of miss him in a twisted, sad way. Regardless of how he wanted to crawl in a hole and hide whenever he flashed back to the way Ben's hands would grip his hips as he drove into him or the way he called Shane *baby* like he owned him. He hated that Ben knew how badly he wanted it. How much he loved the feeling of being someone's property. That's what made Shane the most ashamed. He *let* Ben treat him that way. And that meant that a part of him must have enjoyed it. Otherwise, he wouldn't have gone back after the first time.

"I have practice so," Shane said. "Can you please move out of my way?"

Ben's feet stayed firmly planted in one spot, blocking Shane from moving in the direction he needed to go.

"Please move," Shane requested. He wasn't being mean, yet. But he was ready to be if that's what Ben needed to get through to him.

"Now," Shane said again.

Ben just stood there like a statue, frozen and unmoveable. He didn't so much as acknowledge the fact that Shane was clearly in a rush. He never respected Shane's time or respected the things that were important to Shane. The night they met, he insulted hockey players. Shane had never forgotten that. He was always looking down on him.

"I thought maybe you were with someone else," Ben said.

Fucking hell, this was impossible.

"Would that be wrong," Shane asked. "If I was with someone else. We're not dating, right?"

"I just think that you owe me an explanation," Ben suggested. His eyes were fixed on Shane in a way that made Shane feel vulnerable. He was taller than Ben, but Shane always felt the urge to make himself smaller in his presence.

"I don't think I do," Shane said with as much politeness as he could muster. "And I'm going to be late, so can you please move."

"Were you with that old guy," Ben said. The comment was so flippant that Shane nearly walked right past him without it even registering. "That guy I saw coming out of your room last week."

No fucking way. Shane stopped in his tracks. That makes no sense. How did he even... Shane must have misheard him.

"What did you just say," Shane asked, attempting to keep his anger under control.

"Oh, come on," Ben said in a tone so casual they may as well have been discussing the weather. "You know who I'm talking about." Shane didn't say anything. "You are fucking him, right? It's okay if you are. You can tell me. It's the lying that I don't understand."

Shane's pulse quickened. His brain went straight to denial. He refused to let this loser have any more power over him than he already did. Unless Ben had proof, he would deny anything he said.

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Shane's face betrayed him.

"I think you do," Ben said. "I think you know exactly *who* I'm talking about."

Shane was panicked. He needed to make a decision and stick to it. Either continue with his strategy of complete denial, or throw himself on Ben's mercy and hope that he'll keep their secret out of the goodness of his heart.

Unless there was a hidden third option. Shane could hardly let his mind go there right now.

"Do you have any proof of what you *think* you saw that day," Shane asked.

Ben smiled that beautiful ugly smile that made Shane's heart turn to stone. *Fuck*.

His conceited expression made Shane nauseous. The person standing directly across from him was physically repellant. Shane didn't understand how he could have ever found him attractive enough to get in bed with him.

Shane had messed up this interaction. His denial was as good as a confession.

"Why were you even close to my room," Shane deflected. "Did you come looking for me?"

Ben seemed taken aback by that question, like the answer was so obvious that Shane didn't need to ask.

"You stopped talking to me," Ben said, his ego still clearly bruised from the rejection but good enough at masking it. "I thought maybe something happened."

"Nothing happened," Shane confirmed. "I just came to my senses."

Ben scoffed. "Sure," he said sarcastically. "It had nothing to do with Rozanov."

He was hoping that Ben hadn't seen the old guy's face. Or maybe it was just a lucky guess. After all, Ilya was infamous for banging freshman.

Shane could have punched him. Not that he would ever actually punch someone, outside of that one time, but that was totally different. He would never hit someone in real life.

He straightened his posture. Shane could be intimidating too when he wanted to be.

"What did you think was going to happen with us," Shane asked tersely. "Seriously? What kind of relationship did you think we were going to have after you fucked me in a bathroom? Do you think I would have done that with someone I planned on actually dating?"

His words were working. Ben wasn't smiling anymore.

"You thought we were just going to ride off into the sunset," Shane asked rhetorically. "You're not my boyfriend. I can do whatever I want. I don't belong to you. And if you tell anyone," Shane leaned in, as menacingly as he could, "That will only go badly for you. No one will believe you over me."

Ben put his hand to his heart, pretending to be hurt. Or maybe he actually was hurt.

"Ouch, Shane."

"It's just a fact," Shane doubled down. "I *mean* something to this university. I bring in funding, endorsements, and people know who I am. You're nobody. You're nothing. Some guy that I fucked because I was bored and there was nothing better to do."

You're just some guy I fucked because you were there when he wasn't.

Shane knew he was being harsh, and maybe being such a dick would bite him in the ass later. But right now, he needed to put this piece of shit in his place. Bending the knee to him would only make him think that he could walk all over people. Shane wasn't going to allow himself to be walked over anymore.

"It's not like it's some big secret," Ben said. "Everyone knows how cozy Rozanov gets with his students. I just didn't realize that *you* were one of them. I mean," he shook his head, looking at Shane with pity, "Fucking your professor? I thought you were better than that."

"Trust me, I couldn't go any lower than I did when I was with you," Shane spat.

"You're an asshole," Ben said.

"And you're one of the sleaziest people I've ever met."

"I thought I was what you needed," Ben said. His arrogance was astounding.

"I just said that because I was horny," Shane said frankly.

"For the record," Ben said, inches away from Shane's face. "You were the one that came on to me. I didn't ask you to pull me into a bathroom and suck my dick."

God, why was he acting like such a fucking crybaby over this? So one guy didn't like him, who cares? Why couldn't he just move on with his life and keep Shane out of his crosshairs?

"You act like I was the only one in the room that night," Shane said.

“Please,” Ben scoffed. “You were practically begging me to fuck you.”

“Practically,” Shane repeated his term. “When did I ever ask you to fuck me that night?”

“You definitely asked me to,” Ben said confidently.

In the heat of the moment, Shane may have asked him to. He couldn't remember. But it didn't mean the experience was entirely enjoyable for him.

“It doesn't matter,” Shane conceded. “I really don't care. I just want you to leave me alone.”

“You don't own the hallway Shane,” Ben reminded him.

Shane was starting to regret not taking Ilya up on his offer to make Ben's life hell.

"Just stay out of my way and I'll stay out of yours," Shane tried to strike a deal. "We don't have to do this. I don't want to hate you, so please stop trying to make me hate you."

They stared at each other for a couple seconds without speaking while Ben ruminated on Shane's proposal.

When he finally spoke, Shane's heart sank.

"What if I don't want to leave you alone?"

Contrary to what Ben may have thought of him, Shane was more than a pretty face. He was more than some dumb jock who shot pucks into nets. And he was definitely smart enough to tell exactly where this was going.

Ben had him dead to rights. This was blackmail. And that meant that Ben must have wanted something from him to keep quiet about what he saw. And Ben never wanted anything from Shane except sex.

Shane swallowed his dignity, turned off his brain, and grazed Ben's hand. As he touched him, he looked deeply into his eyes, making it perfectly clear what his intentions were. Making sure he understood the lengths he was willing to go to in order to keep this a secret.

"I have a few minutes before my practice," Shane said, blocking out any animus he felt towards him and preparing his mind to go back to a place where he could maybe enjoy having sex with him again. "I can make you feel good again," Shane offered. "I'm sorry I didn't text you back, okay? But I'm here now." He lightly tugged at Ben's collar. "We can keep seeing each other. And then maybe we can just forget this whole thing ever happened."

Ben shook Shane's hand off him.

"What the fuck are you doing," Ben asked, seemingly disgusted by how Shane was coming on to him.

Shane was confused. Had he completely misread the situation?

"This is what you want, isn't it?"

Ben's face looked a little red. He was embarrassed.

"Wow," he said. "You really don't think very much of me, huh?"

No, Shane didn't.

“So you’re not trying to blackmail me?” Shane needed to have verbal confirmation. If Ben wasn’t trying to blackmail him, then why were they having this conversation?

“Holy shit, Shane.” Ben seemed almost amused. “You think the only way I can get laid is through blackmail?”

Shane shrugged. “Kind of, yeah.”

Knowing that Ben didn't want sex was a relief, but it was almost more terrifying because now Shane had to wonder if there was something else he wanted more.

“Well I managed to get you,” Ben said, smugly.

That was a mistake, Shane thought.

While Shane was processing the fact that he wasn't being blackmailed, he made eye contact with Rose, who was headed north down the hallway carrying a purple gift bag in her left hand. She saw his distress and came right over.

“What’s going on here,” she asked, placing a protective arm around Shane.

If looks could kill, Ben would have been reduced to a pile of blood and guts on the floor.

“Nothing,” Ben said with a slight smile. “Absolutely nothing.”

Ben stared at Shane, and Shane nearly cowered. But it was two against one.

“Don’t look at him,” Rose snapped. “You’re dealing with me right now.”

“Can’t we just talk,” Ben asked, ignoring the fact that Shane was not interested in talking to him. “Come on, Shane. Tell her you’re okay. We were just talking.”

“Find literally anyone else to harass,” Rose commanded. “But leave him alone.”

Ben rolled his eyes.

"Whatever," he conceded. “See you around, Shane.”

“No, you won’t,” Rose interjected as Ben turned to leave. “Get a life.”

Ben turned the same corner and went back the same way he came.

Once he was out of their line of sight, Rose turned to Shane.

“Are you okay?”

Shane nodded, still feeling the anxiety course through him.

“Yeah,” Shane said, trying to shake off the horrible feeling stewing in his gut. “Thanks, I owe you.”

Rose winced. Her reaction to Ben was visceral. Shane wasn’t the only one who despised him.

“I hate that guy,” she said. “I feel like I need to take a shower every time he looks at me.”

Shane was extremely familiar with that impulse.

“I know what you mean,” he agreed.

Rose shook her head in disgust. “What did he want anyway?”

For one reason or another, Shane didn’t think that it was a good idea to give Rose that information. He trusted her implicitly, but the less people who knew about this, the better. She didn’t deserve to be burdened with all the gory details of the fallout of his actions. This was Shane’s responsibility, and he would have to fix it on his own.

“Nothing important,” Shane lied, before sprinkling in a kernel of truth. “He wanted to know why I wasn’t texting him back.”

“Ugh,” Rose expressed her disapproval. “What a creep. I don’t know what you ever saw in him.”

The reasons behind his attraction to Ben would be far too complicated to explain, and even more difficult for Rose to understand. He didn’t even fully understand them.

So instead, Shane simply said, “Me either.”

Rose flashed a small smile and cautiously handed the gift bag to Shane.

“Happy birthday,” she said, trying to sound enthusiastic. “I wanted to give it to you before but—”

“No, that’s fine,” Shane said. He peeked inside and saw a pair of socks and then something else sitting on top.

“Don’t open it yet,” Rose stopped him. “Wait until you get home.”

Shane brought her in for a hug, feeling comforted by the familiar smell of her strawberry bodywash.

“This is perfect,” he said. “But I really do have to go now.”

Shane couldn’t bear to let stupid Ben make him miss another practice, even though he desperately wanted to run to Ilya and tell him everything that just happened.

"Okay but text me after," Rose made him promise.

Shane hugged Rose one last time, not caring that it was probably overkill, and then forced himself to walk to the athletics building and plaster a smile on his face for the remainder of the morning.

Hold it together, Shane.

He only had to keep it together for a couple more hours and then he could cry or scream or do whatever he needed to do in response to the utter powerlessness he felt.

There were moments during practice that he got so in the zone that he actually managed to forget about what Ben told him. But as soon as he stepped off the ice, the memory of that morning's events smacked him right in the face and he couldn't stop thinking about it.

He needed to tell Ilya.

He quickly hit the showers and then departed for Ilya’s apartment.

Shane had been waiting outside Ilya's apartment for twenty minutes before he thought to look for a spare key. He swiped his hand under the mat and found it, put it in the lock and twisted. Once inside, he went and sat at the kitchen table and stewed for a while.

This was all his fucking fault. He wished that he could take the past two weeks back. That he could have a re-do of that stupid night at that stupid fucking frat party. If he had just given Miles a chance instead of getting railed in a bathroom, maybe he wouldn't be in this mess.

Or maybe if Ben's boyfriend hadn't chosen to pick a fight, which Shane was beginning to wonder if he had misread, and smash a glass on the floor, none of this would have happened.

Shane heard the sound of the door click open.

Ilya.

"Shane," Ilya said as he walked in the door. "Shane?"

"In here," Shane called out.

Ilya approached him with a frantic look in his eye. "What is wrong? Are you hurt?"

"No," Shane assured him. He should have prefaced his texts with that instead of being cryptic. "I'm sorry but I had to see you."

"You could not wait until tonight?"

"No, I needed to talk to you."

"Are you okay," Ilya asked, looking Shane over.

"It's a long story."

Ilya relaxed a bit. "When I saw your text, I thought maybe something was really wrong."

"Something is wrong," Shane continued. "Someone saw us, Ilya."

Ilya's expression remained stoic. He didn't seem to want to startle Shane or contribute to his anxiety.

"When," Ilya asked. "How?"

"On my birthday," Shane said. "Someone saw you leaving my dorm."

His eyes watered.

"I'm sorry, Ilya. I'm so sorry."

"Shane," Ilya interrupted his rambling.

"I fucked everything up. You should hate me."

"Hey," Ilya said, grabbing hold of Shane's shoulders. "If anything, it is my fault for not being more careful."

“No,” Shane started. “If I hadn’t run away, then none of this would have happened. You wouldn’t have had to come find me and then we wouldn’t have gotten caught.”

Shane knew it wasn’t his fault that Ilya showed up at his dorm unannounced. That was Ilya’s decision. That wasn’t what Shane felt guilty about. It was the Ben of it all. He let this creep into their lives.

“Who saw us,” Ilya asked simply.

Shane couldn’t bring himself to say it. He was too embarrassed.

“Just some guy,” Shane lied.

“Are they going to tell anyone?”

“I don’t think so,” Shane said, still not entirely sure what to make of their conversation that morning. “I don’t really know. I can never tell what he’s thinking.”

Shane was buzzing and couldn’t calm his body. He collapsed into Ilya’s arms as Ilya softly tussled his hair.

“Calm down,” Ilya said soothingly. “You are okay. We are okay.”

“Why aren’t you freaking out about this?”

Ilya kept Shane in his arms, extending their hug.

“Nothing is wrong,” Ilya assured him. “This is my problem to deal with, not yours. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

Shane believed him.

“I know you won’t,” Shane said. *If you can help it.*

“Have you eaten today?” Ilya swiped his thumb under Shane’s heavy eyes.

“No,” Shane mumbled. “But I’m not hungry.”

Shane was too stressed out to eat anything.

“You will eat if I have anything to say about it,” Ilya said. “I will make us dinner. Go take a shower. Relax. Have a nap if you need.”

Shane really needed a nap. He wanted to go to sleep and shut out the world for a while.

“Do you even have anything to cook with,” Shane asked.

Ilya thought about it for a moment. “I will order food,” he said finally.

“Healthy food, please.”

“So bacon cheeseburgers?” Ilya smirked.

Shane glared.

“Okay,” Shane agreed. "I probably won't eat anything anyway."

“My love,” Ilya said, followed by something in Russian that Shane didn’t understand, but he assumed was endearing. "You will eat. I will not let you waste away."

“What did you just say?”

"My love," Ilya said.

"No, the other thing. Was that in Russian?"

“None of your business,” Ilya said, being aloof.

“Tell me,” Shane demanded

Ilya smiled and Shane thought he had never looked so handsome.

“I said I love you.”

Shane melted.

“Awww,” he teased.

“Go shower,” Ilya told him.

Shane took the order and set out for the bedroom. He quickly disrobed and placed his folded shirt and pants on the bed. Then he went in search of a clean towel.

“Ilya,” Shane called from the bedroom.

“Yes Shane,” Ilya yelled back from the kitchen.

“Where do you keep the towels?”

“Under the sink,” Ilya yelled.

Shane opened the cabinet and found a towel. He unfolded it and put it on the rack next to the shower.

Ilya walked into the bedroom. "Shane? Did you find them?"

"Uh-huh."

Ilya turned to face Shane, who was standing outside the shower. He looked like he was undressing Shane with his eyes, even though he was already naked.

"Did you order," Shane asked.

Ilya didn't respond right away.

"Uh, yeah."

"Something healthy?"

Ilya smiled. "Yes."

"How long until it gets here?"

"Half an hour," Ilya estimated. "I think. I can check."

"No," Shane said. "That sounds like enough time."

He walked over to Ilya, put his arms around him and kissed him, softly, while running his hands through his hair. Ilya wrapped his arms around Shane's back, pulling him closer.

Shane broke away and started unbuttoning Ilya's shirt while maintaining eye contact.

"Will you shower with me?"

Once Shane unbuttoned the final button, Ilya did the rest. His pants soon followed, forming a pile on the bathroom floor, before following Shane inside.

They showered for twenty minutes while they waited for the food to arrive. During the twenty minutes, they didn't have sex right away. Instead, they took turns standing under the shower head as the hot water gently cascaded down their bodies.

Ilya squirted a dime-sized portion of shampoo into his palm and massaged the mixture into Shane's scalp before thoroughly rinsing his hair. Then he did the same with the conditioner.

Ilya sniffed his head.

"You smell good."

"I smell like you," Shane fired back.

They kissed for a long time before Ilya made a move. He wrapped his hand around Shane's cock and stroked him slowly, just enough to make him fully hard.

Then Ilya sank to his knees, pulled Shane's left leg over his shoulder and started rimming him.

"Is this okay?"

"Mmmhmm."

Shane held himself up with one hand against the shower wall. The steam kept rising until the glass was foggy and the outline of Shane's hand on the glass was visible.

Ilya spread him apart with his hands. He could picture his muscles relaxing with each flutter of Ilya's perfect tongue. His tongue brushed against his hole one last time before it was inside and Shane shuddered at the feeling.

"I think I'm ready now," Shane briefed him. But Ilya wasn't interested in progressing beyond what he was already doing.

"This is just for you," he said. "A reward for always being so good for me."

Shane let his head rest against the back of the shower as his peripheral vision became blurry. He shut his eyes and allowed the pleasure overtake him as he rode Ilya's face.

"Faster," Shane said, and Ilya instantly followed his direction. "Keep doing that. Don't stop. *Don't stop.*"

Ilya quickly brought him to the edge, and Shane stroked himself until he was spilling over the tile. The water swiftly erased the evidence of Shane's orgasm, washing it down the drain.

Shane slumped over as he rode out his orgasm. When it was over, Ilya unhooked Shane's leg from his shoulder and kissed his way up Shane's thighs.

Ilya was breathing heavy.

Shane took his face in his hands. "Are you okay," he asked.

"I'm amazing," Ilya said. They both laughed.

"I love when you go down on me like that."

"You like it more than my dick," Ilya asked, curiously, not defensively.

"I didn't say that," Shane clarified.

"I love it too," Ilya agreed. "Almost as much as being inside you."

Ilya kissed Shane's cheek, making Shane close his eyes. He hung his head on Ilya's shoulder.

"I think I'm hungry now."

"Good, because the food is probably here."

Ilya got out of the shower and grabbed their towels. He dried his hair a bit before wrapping his towel around his waist and going to check the front door.

"Are you really wearing that outside?"

"Just to the door," Ilya said.

Shane couldn't help but be charmed as his married boyfriend left to get their takeout.

The paranoia that had taken residence in Shane's gut ever since that morning had momentarily vanished. Nothing mattered as long as he was with Ilya. It was like there was a bubble around them, protecting them, keeping their secret safe. Nothing could touch them when they were here.

Chapter End Notes

i think i might be incapable of writing a single chapter without including some kind of sex scene and i'm not quite sure what that says about me haha

overall i feel like my writing is improving (maybe), idk let me know in the comments.

see you next time :)

Chapter 22: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there's 438 of you subscribed! i'm giving virtual hugs to each of you

i split it into two chapters because I like suspense and have a short attention span lol. but i'll post part two soon!!

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

Shane hadn't checked his phone since he left practice the previous day. He'd been too busy with his boyfriend to care about anyone trying to reach him.

He had missed a couple messages from Rose around five o'clock asking him where he was. Then a few more texts hours later where she correctly assumed that he must be off somewhere getting laid.

He should have been so happy after spending the night with Ilya. He didn't even run off in the morning this time.

Instead, he had gotten eaten out in the shower and then devoured a protein bowl in bed while they watched the highlights on TSN. It was literally the perfect date.

But Shane was feeling strange this morning. There wasn't a clear reason for it. He was still a little skittish after his confrontation with Ben. The stuff Ben was stressful, but he wasn't too concerned about it at the moment. Maybe he should have been more afraid of him, but it was hard to be afraid of a guy two inches shorter than you.

Shane's mother had taught him to trust his instincts. And as an athlete, Shane prided himself on being intuitive about his body, on being able to recognize when something felt "off".

Today felt off.

He had greeted the morning locked in Ilya's arms. Their bodies had pressed together in their sleep. They kissed without coming up for air, and less than a minute after he opened his eyes, Ilya slipped himself inside of Shane and pulled two orgasms from him before eight a.m.

His conversation with Ilya afterwards did nothing to assuage his anxiety.

"Shane," Ilya said with concern. "What's wrong? You look like you saw a ghost."

Shane didn't have a clear answer.

"I don't know," he said, lost in thought. "Doesn't this feel weird to you?"

"What about it?"

Shane tried to articulate something inarticulable.

"It feels too easy," Shane said. "I keep waiting for something bad to happen."

Ilya snuggled in closer.

"Maybe it won't," Ilya said optimistically.

Shane was unflinchingly honest. "I don't think I'm supposed to be happy."

"I think you are looking for something to go wrong," Ilya suggested.

"I'm just being realistic."

When he returned to his dorm around lunchtime, Shane locked the door and barricaded himself inside.

He was being paranoid. He couldn't shake the impression that something was wrong.

Shane rarely checked his official university email. Most of the time, there was nothing important. But today, something, call it intuition, told him to check it. If only to make sure that everything was okay.

He logged into his university email with a pit in his stomach. There was no real reason to be nervous. Just a vague, unsettled feeling.

Shane checked his inbox and there was an email from the Dean of the Arts program. It was from yesterday at 4:30 pm. Sent with high importance.

The subject line read: *Meeting Request - Sensitive*.

It was addressed only to Shane. No other students or faculty had received it.

Either this was going to be a good thing or a very, very, bad thing.

His mind immediately went to the worst case scenario. Was he going to lose his scholarship? His captaincy? No, it couldn't be that. He had sorted things out with his coach and his teammates.

Had he cheated on a test and then later forgot he had cheated? Did he accidentally plagiarize?

No, Shane would never be that careless.

There was only one possible reason for an email like that, and it was the one thing that Shane couldn't bring himself think about.

He took a deep breath, shut his eyes and opened it.

Dear Shane Hollander,

An urgent matter has been brought to my attention that requires us to meet. I'd like to find a time for us to meet either today or tomorrow. Please let me know a time that would work for you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

And at the bottom of the email was her name and signature block.

Holy fucking shit.

He nearly dropped his phone in his lap.

How was he supposed to stay calm about this?

The message was so cryptic. Shane assumed that that was probably by design. It's not like she could just come out and ask him if he was fucking his professor.

Jesus Christ, poor Ilya. Did Ilya even know that this was happening? Shane needed to warn him.

Then Shane saw the follow-up email right above it. It was sent shortly after the original.

Hello Shane,

Our meeting is confidential. Due to concerns that I have about protecting your right to privacy and the privacy of other students, I am going to ask that you do not engage in discussions about this meeting with anyone prior to—

Shane stopped skimming the message after he'd seen enough to get the gist. They were trying to ensure that he wouldn't give Ilya the heads up so that they could interrogate them both separately and see if their stories matched.

Shane's hated that his gut was proven right again.

All he wanted was a day of peace. Just twenty-four hours where nothing bad happened.

Was that really too much to ask?

Shane spent the rest of the day in a downward spiral of confusion and anxiety. Rose assured him that the meeting was nothing more than a formality. It was probably just some conversation about branding for the hockey team. But Shane knew better than to let himself believe that everything would work out.

The Dean was a woman in her early forties, with short, blunt-cut light blond hair and sharp cheekbones. She had taught at the university for a handful of years before being promoted just a little over five months ago. He'd never had any interaction with her before today.

"A complaint," Shane repeated the word that she used.

There were four people in the Dean's office, including Shane. Going clockwise, the Dean was seated next to the Chair of the History Department, an older woman with grey hair. Next to the Dean on her left was someone that Shane had never seen, but assumed was here as some kind of witness. They were all sitting opposite him behind a long table, and Shane was alone.

"Yes," she confirmed.

"I don't understand what this has to do with me."

"As I said," the Dean continued, since Shane was clearly too anxious to have fully processed what she told him a minute prior. "An anonymous complaint was filed which made some disturbing allegations about Professor Rozanov. Your name was mentioned in the complaint. That's why you are here today."

She gave him only the bare facts.

This was an ambush. Otherwise why wouldn't they tell him what the meeting was about beforehand?

He should have asked if he could bring someone with him. His mother would have shut this shit down in a second.

“Can I see the complaint,” Shane asked, trying to sound calm.

Shane had researched the school’s policies on student-faculty relationships. It wasn’t against the policy for a professor to be sexually involved with a student but it was a violation for a professor to sleep with students who they were currently teaching.

The Dean shook her head. “I’m sorry, I’m not able to give you that information at this point in time.”

Not able to, or was she just not willing to show him?

Ilya's entire career and reputation was on the line. And what about Shane? If news of his affair with a man became public, his professional ambitions might be over too.

He wondered how far was this situation was going to go. For now it was just a complaint. Complaints needed to be substantiated with evidence, and Shane wasn’t intending on giving them any.

Shane tried to highlight the difficulty in responding to allegations when he didn’t have the information in front of him.

“How can I respond to whatever was said in the complaint if I can’t actually see the complaint?”

Shane made eye contact with the woman to the Dean’s left, with the curly brown hair and glasses. She shot him a small, consoling smile.

"We're not asking you to respond to it," the Dean assured. "You're not being accused of anything. We just wanted to meet with you to provide a space for you to talk about anything you feel you want to share with us."

Wait, did they think he was a victim in this? Shane was no one's victim. The insinuation made him sick to his stomach.

“Does Ilya—” *Shit. Fuck.* It was the most amateur mistake and Shane scolded himself internally. He was better than that. Or he thought he was.

Shane corrected himself but the damage was already done. “Does Professor Rozanov know that I’m meeting with you?”

The Dean took a few seconds to answer, no doubt because she was thinking about Shane’s obvious slip up.

“No,” she answered. “We also want you to know that anything you tell us will not impact your grade in Professor Rozanov’s class this semester.”

His grade? Shane didn’t give a fuck about a stupid grade. He cared about protecting his boyfriend’s career. He cared about his own career.

God, he hadn’t even thought about himself this whole time. Are disciplinary proceedings public, Shane wondered. What if it got leaked somehow? A tenured professor getting caught sleeping with students seemed like something that could end up in the news cycle. What would happen if their affair became fodder for public consumption? He would never play in the NHL. His dreams would be over.

He was only nineteen. It couldn’t end like this. Shane wouldn’t let it.

Stupid Ben with his stupid perfect hair.

Stupid fucking frat party.

Why did he let Rose drag him to that party?

Why did he have to leave Ilya's apartment that day? None of this would have happened if he hadn't been so impulsive.

He needed a goddamn time machine.

With all of these thoughts flooding his brain, Shane realized that he should ask the obvious question.

"Is Professor Rozanov in trouble," Shane asked.

"Right now, I'm concerned about *you* Shane," the Dean told him. "Not him."

Maybe she had a point. Shane should have been thinking more about self-preservation.

He took a deep calming breath. "I'm fine," he said, unintentionally sounding performative. "Really."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes," Shane said sharply. "Why are you asking me that?"

"You're not alone," she told him. Shane had to resist the urge to roll his eyes at her use of a slogan. "You have people behind you. If and when you feel ready to take that step."

Shane blew air out of his nose and counted to three.

"I don't know what that means, but I promise you, I'm fine."

Finally, the grey haired woman said something.

"But it's okay if you're not," she said. "We're all here to support you."

"I'm sorry," Shane said, exhausted by tip-toeing around the problem. "I think there's been some kind of misunderstanding. I'm totally, completely fine. Nothing's wrong. No one did anything to me."

The Dean wouldn't give up. She had already decided that something happened.

"If someone took advantage of their position-"

"No!" Shane put his hands in the air. "Nothing like that happened."

"But if it did, you wouldn't be alone," the Dean said. "Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Shane definitely did not understand.

"No," he shot back.

"I know it can be scary," she said, pretending like she could somehow understand being in his position. "But it's important to be brave."

Shane's mouth was agape. This wasn't only embarrassing, it was highly offensive. What they were suggesting was complete bullshit. They didn't understand anything.

"I'm not having sex with him," Shane said.

It was possibly the most incriminating statement he could have made.

No one said anything. There was no reaction.

Shane's eyes filled with tears, and then he said something stupid just to fill the silence.

"What about Dallas Kent?"

It was something Shane said in the heat of the moment that he knew he would probably live to regret. He was just so angry and hurt and he didn't understand why an actual predator like Dallas could walk around campus free to continue assaulting women while the administration did nothing.

The Dean looked confused. Not concerned, not scared, just simply bewildered.

"I'm sorry," she said slowly, like she had no possible idea what Shane was talking about.
"Who is that?"

It was probably the last thing she had expected him to say.

Shane continued digging himself deeper even as his rational mind was begging him to stop.

"He's a left-wing on our school's hockey team, and he's a rapist," Shane said. The word *rapist* left his mouth like he was spitting venom. "Why is he still allowed to play? Why is he even allowed at this school? People walk around this campus terrified of him. He should have been expelled."

Everyone on the other side of the desk looked at each other in clear panic.

The Dean asked him in a firm tone, "How do you know that Dallas Kent is a rapist?"

What kind of question was that? Shane didn't have to be in the room when it was happening to know that Dallas was a rapist. He was at that party. He saw Rose save that woman - was she even a woman yet - Shane didn't even know how old she was. There were fucking Facebook groups for the women Dallas had forced himself on.

"Everyone knows!" Shane said, fuming. "Why haven't you done anything about him?"

He took a second to breathe.

"Don't you care about *actual* victims?"

They were wasting all this time and effort interrogating him when they should have been reaching out to the women who were actually being terrorized on this campus by a fucking criminal.

"We've never had this issue brought to our attention until now," the Dean said, trying to absolve herself of any responsibility.

Shane didn't believe that there was any universe in which the administration was entirely unaware of Dallas's actions. There were too many women. Too many people knew about this for them to have never been informed. If they chose not to look into it, that was wilful ignorance as far as Shane was concerned.

"I saw him," Shane said. "He was with a woman and she was drunk."

"How do you know she was drunk?"

Didn't everyone know what a drunk person looked like?

Shane just shook his head, astonished by how this was unfolding.

"Shane," the Dean said as if he were now the one on trial. "If you thought that you witnessed an attempted rape, why didn't you report it?"

"I told my Coach about it," Shane said, picking up the shovel and continuing to dig. "He said he would handle it. But nothing happened. Nothing ever happens to people like him."

Shane knew that this was bad. He shouldn't be saying any of this right now. But at least they had moved on from talking about him and Ilya, and blowing up his entire college hockey career to save Ilya's job might be worth it. Besides, Dallas wasn't a very good player anyway. And he should have gone to jail a long time ago.

The Dean nodded. Shane could tell that she knew he was going to be a real problem for her.

"Well, I think you've given us all a lot to think about," she said after a moment.

"That's it?" Shane was stunned. Is this how university administration worked? Call you in, interrogate you, get you to give up all the names of the bad men you know, and then you just leave like nothing happened.

"For now," the Dean confirmed.

"Don't you want to ask me anything else?"

Shane wasn't sure why he was now begging to continue being interrogated, when all he had wanted was to this entire time was deflect. But this all felt too easy. Wasn't he supposed to be reprimanded or something? The other shoe was going to drop at any moment.

"Why would we," she asked, obviously holding back her real feelings. "According to your statement, you and Professor Rozanov are not having sex."

"That's right, we're not," Shane said. It wasn't entirely a lie. He wasn't having sex with him at that precise moment. Now if she had asked him about the previous evening it would be a different story.

"You're welcome to go back to class," the Dean informed him.

"I don't have class."

"Then you're free to go home," the Dean said. "Or wherever else you feel like going. If we have any more questions we'll be sure to contact you."

Questions about what? His relationship with Ilya wasn't the only issue he had to worry about anymore. He had just reported one of his teammates to the university. And his Coach too.

"You're just going to let me leave," Shane asked, confused.

"Yes," she repeated. "Go home Shane. We're done here."

Shane nervously scooted his chair away from the table, got up and collected his backpack from the back of the chair. He didn't let himself look back as he walked out of the solid oak doors.

As soon as he was back in the real world, he forgot almost everything he said. Over the next five minutes, as he walked back to his dorm, the memories came to him in waves.

It was going to be difficult to keep his lies straight if he couldn't even remember what he said in response to most of their questions. They were surely going to interview Ilya too. And their answers needed to match up perfectly to avoid suspicion.

Or maybe having the exact same answers would raise more suspicions. They didn't want to have it look like they were colluding to craft some perfect cover.

He had attempted to call Ilya immediately after he left the meeting. It was probably unwise, but he couldn't shut him out right now. He also needed to warn him of what was coming his way.

Ilya didn't pick up his phone and Shane didn't want to leave a message. The phone call on its own was bad enough but leaving a message was hard evidence that something was going on between them. *Fuck*, what if they asked to see Ilya's phone log? It was his personal number so they couldn't do that, right? They had no authority. They aren't the police.

Please call me, Shane hummed internally. *Pick up your fucking phone*.

A couple hours later when he was curled up in a ball crying in bed, Shane got a text from Rozanov.

Two words.

My place.

Chapter End Notes

ugh i hate writing the stressful stuff, but yay for shane standing up for himself!

what do you think will happen next, let me know in the comments

byeee

Chapter 23: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

back with part 2! spoiler it's basically pure smut with some dialogue mixed in at the end

i always want to take a longer break between chapters but this story just has a hold on me. i do need to study though!

enjoy :)

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

When Shane showed up at Ilya's apartment, which he had only left mere hours ago, he was in shambles.

"I didn't know what to do," Shane blurted out. "They were asking me all these questions, but it was like they already knew the answers. And they didn't seem to believe what I was saying. They just kept telling me that they supported me and that I needed to be brave." He shook his head. "I don't even remember half of what I said."

Ilya raised his hand to Shane's lips to gently shush him.

"It's okay," Ilya said.

How did he still not realize how bad this was?

"No, it's really not."

"My love, breathe," he commanded.

Shane took a deep breath in and out.

"Ilya," Shane repeated. "I totally blew it. If they didn't know before, they do now."

Ilya tilted his head to the right and smiled.

"You are perfect," he said, admiringly.

"I'm not perfect," Shane pouted.

"But you are," Ilya confirmed. "You could not be bad if you tried, you know this don't you?"

Shane's heart was all mushy and his brain was completely fried from overthinking.

"I'm so sorry," Shane apologized again. "Do you want to talk about it?"

Ilya shook his head.

"No," he answered. "I really don't."

He pulled Shane towards him and squeezed his ass.

Before Shane could process what was happening, Ilya was kissing him.

Shane spoke each time Ilya's lips pulled off his for long enough. "I didn't tell them the truth," Shane said. "I wouldn't ever tell anyone."

“I know,” Ilya said, his voice firm and certain. “I knew you would not tell them.”

He attacked Shane with his lips. It felt like a *thank you*. He was thanking Shane for keeping his secret.

It was Shane's secret too, just as much as it was Ilya's.

Ilya tugged impatiently at the bottom of Shane's t-shirt and Shane lifted his arms to accommodate its removal.

“I'm sorry they dragged you into this,” Ilya murmured an apology into their kiss. He maneuvered them towards the bed before Shane even knew that's where they were going, all while skillfully unbuckling Shane's belt with one hand.

Shane intercepted Ilya's hand before it could reach inside his pants. “Wait,” Shane took control. “We need to talk first.”

“No,” Ilya disagreed. “We can talk after.” He kissed him again, jamming his tongue in his mouth and making Shane swallow the words on his tongue. “I need to feel you. Fuck, I need to be inside you.”

They collapsed onto the bed and Shane felt Ilya's cock brush against through his jeans.

Shane should have insisted on talking first. But god, he needed it too. So badly.

But he didn't need it quite as bad as Ilya did. And Shane knew that he could use that detail to leverage a real conversation.

“No,” Shane said firmly, pushing Ilya off of him with so much force that he landed on the other side of the bed. “We’re going to talk first.”

“I’m done talking,” Ilya said, pawing at the zipper of Shane’s jeans. “All I ever do is talk.”

Shane was adamant. “Well I’m not.”

“Ugh,” Ilya said, eyes rolling back. “Talk about what?”

“Us,” Shane said firmly. “I want to talk about us. We need to come up with a plan, Ilya.”

That answer only seemed to make Ilya less inclined to talk to him.

“I am not in the mood,” Ilya relayed. “I have had a terrible day. I just need you.”

Too fucking bad, Shane thought. He wasn’t a damn stress ball. And there was no chance that Ilya’s day was somehow worse than what Shane had endured that afternoon.

This was something that was important to him and Ilya wasn’t even trying to listen. He needed to take a stand. A real stand.

“Fine, but I’m not having sex again until we talk,” Shane informed him, crossing his arms over his chest. “So you can just forget it.”

Ilya raised an eyebrow, testing Shane’s commitment to his new rule.

Shane realized that what he was doing seemed a bit manipulative. He felt like he was taking his toys to play in a different sandbox. But he wouldn’t be able to enjoy sex right now anyway. Not until they talked things through.

“Are you sure,” Ilya asked. He wasn't pressuring, just asking.

Shane was *mostly* sure.

He waited about two seconds too long to answer.

“Of course,” Shane said.

Shane had never attempted a sex strike before. He wasn't sure how these things usually go. Would Ilya cave and give in right away? He sure hoped so.

What Shane definitely was not expecting was for Ilya to defiantly reach into his pants and started stroking himself under his boxers.

Ilya was jerking off. Right in front of him like he wasn't even there.

Shane's eyes widened with shock and frustration. “What are you doing?”

“What does it look like,” Ilya asked, showing no remorse.

“Are you seriously going to do that right in front of me?”

What was wrong with him? Did he have no manners?

“Look, I need to get off,” Ilya said, rationally. “I won't be able to think clearly until I do. And you're not going to do it. So, there you go.”

Shane grimaced. This was an obvious loophole that he was a little embarrassed to admit he hadn't considered.

How dare he bypass having sex with Shane like this? There was no way this was anywhere near as good as what Shane could give him. No way in hell.

"That's so gross," Shane said, discouragingly. "I'm never going to look at you the same way after this."

The more Shane insulted him, the more emboldened Ilya became.

"You can watch if you want."

Shane scoffed. "Ew, I don't want to watch you... do that."

But he already was watching, and Ilya didn't seem to be slowing down.

"Hand me the lube," Ilya requested, since it was currently on Shane's nightstand.

"No," Shane said incredulously.

As an alternative, Ilya brought his hand up to just beneath Shane's mouth, and Shane reluctantly spit into his palm.

Ilya used Shane's saliva to stroke himself with less resistance.

“I see how it is,” Shane acknowledged. “I say no one time and suddenly you prefer your hand over me.”

“I didn’t say that,” Ilya disagreed. “If you still want to—“

“No thanks,” Shane quickly rejected the offer before it was even fully extended. “You made your choice. Go ahead. Fuck your hand.”

So Ilya did.

Shane lay on his side with his head propped up and observed Ilya as he made himself come into his fist. Occasionally Shane yawned or cracked his knuckles or generally showed signs of boredom, but he didn’t choose to get up and leave, even though he could have.

He made mental notes of the way Ilya twisted his wrist at certain points, the amount of pressure he used, and the pace at which he stroked himself, and filed it away in a mental folder for another time when he wasn’t quite as pissed off.

“Oh fuck,” Ilya moaned as his cock started leaking.

Shane lazily picked at his fingernails and huffed in annoyance.

“Shane,” Ilya said through shaky breaths.

He reached out for Shane’s arm, but Shane moved a few inches to the right to avoid being grabbed. He wasn’t going to be a part of this. He wasn’t encouraging it. He was just waiting for it to be over so that they could finally have a real conversation without Ilya’s horniness getting them side-tracked.

“Any time now,” Shane voiced his displeasure. “I actually have shit to do besides wait for you to finish.”

Ilya ignored him in favour of teasing him.

“Ah, fuck,” Ilya said, pointlessly, just to irritate Shane even more. “Feels so good.”

Shane furrowed his brow. “I doubt that,” Shane said matter-of-factly. “It’s not as good as me. You’ll be lucky you ever get that again after this.”

“I am not worried,” Ilya said confidently. “You would miss my dick too much.”

That was disturbing. Even if that statement was true, Shane didn’t like being told that he couldn’t control himself.

“I would have fucked you so hard,” Shane said, strangely feeling the need to compete with Ilya’s own grip. “You have no idea that things I would have let you do to me today. But you couldn’t have an adult conversation for five fucking minutes.”

Shane was aware that this was dirty talk, and that dirty talk was technically a form of participation. But he justified it as a means to an end.

“You already let me do everything,” Ilya said, returning Shane’s competitiveness.

“That’s what *you* think,” Shane said. That got Ilya’s attention.

It was almost too easy.

“What would you have let me do to you?”

Ilya's breathing was ragged and his voice like gravel.

Shane didn't need to think too hard about it. He just had to be honest.

"I would have made you fuck my mouth," Shane described his ideal sexual encounter. He kept his tone neutral throughout, as if he were reading his grocery list out loud instead of describing how he wanted to be fucked. "And then I would have ridden you until you were all fucked out and stupid. And then I would have kept using your cock to get myself off."

Ilya's cock was really leaking now, his pre-come mixing with Shane's spit to create a pleasant glide. The sound became wetter and wetter the closer Ilya got to the edge.

"I'm going to come so hard," Ilya said. "Is that what you want?"

Shane sighed loudly and tapped his fingers against his cheek, which was warming by the second.

"I don't care what you do," Shane flippantly answered.

"God Hollander," Ilya gritted out. "Your filthy fucking mouth. Are you sure you don't want to use it on me?"

Shane was using his mouth to get Ilya off, just in a different way than he usually did.

"Enough with the theatrics. Hurry up," Shane demanded, trying to push away his own horny thoughts. "You're taking forever."

"You know what would make it go faster," Ilya insinuated.

He almost considered it. Shane could have made him come in a minute. Maybe even less if he was properly motivated. But he stood his ground. He was determined to stay on the other side of the bed, far, far away from Ilya. And his hands and mouth were staying there too.

“That’s not happening,” Shane decided. “Now fucking come already. Or did you forget how to?”

Ilya bit down on his lip. The skin on his neck was bright pink.

Fed up with the blatant show of disrespect, Shane developed a new strategy.

“You have ten seconds before I leave,” Shane said. “And then you can fuck your hand again tomorrow.”

He started counting down, leaving a few seconds in between each number. “Ten, nine.”

“What is this, Hollander? I know how to count.”

“Make yourself come before I reach zero,” Shane challenged. “Eight, seven.”

Ilya laughed in mockery. “And if I don’t care?”

Shane didn’t have an answer to that.

“Six.”

Ilya stroked himself faster.

“Fuck Shane,” Ilya growled. “You like this, don’t you?”

Shane counted down to two before Ilya’s cock spurted come onto his stomach and chest. The guttural moan that escaped from Ilya’s throat as he came made Shane’s own dick twitch with arousal.

He gave Ilya a few generous seconds to catch his breath before getting back to business.

“Great, you came,” Shane said, his mouth slightly dry. “Good for you. Can we talk now?”

Ilya nodded, seemingly feeling much better.

“Sure, why not?”

Shane stared at him in disbelief.

“I can’t believe you just did that.”

Ilya had a delicious smirk. He licked his lips. “Do you want me to do you next?”

The temptation was strong, but Shane was more disciplined.

“Stay the hell away from me,” Shane said, his voice nearly breaking. “Clean yourself up, put your dick away, get dressed and then meet me in the kitchen.”

Shane’s legs were finally working enough to get out of bed, but as he walked to the kitchen, his body felt all floaty.

Why was that so hot? Maybe some of Ilya's perverseness had rubbed off on him.

They sat across from each other at the kitchen table. Shane's hands were folded in front of him.

It felt like a business meeting, except that Ilya wasn't wearing a shirt.

"I thought I told you to get dressed."

Ilya looked down at himself as if he had somehow forgotten to wear one. "I put on pants," he said as a compromise.

"Whatever," Shane said, exasperatedly. "We need to come up with some kind of plan. What are you going to tell them?"

Ilya was still deadset on not letting Shane get involved.

"No, *we* do not have to do anything," Ilya told him. "This is my problem to fix. You just need to stay out of it."

Shane wasn't going to stop trying to fix the situation.

"I'm already involved," Shane pointed out. "I'm the one that got fucking interrogated today."

He needed to relax and stop being so aggressive.

"I told them we weren't having sex," Shane said.

Ilya smirked, adding a bit of levity. "Well that was a lie."

Shane was beginning to wonder if Ilya's constant flirting was a way of distracting him.

"Yeah," Shane agreed. "So what do we do now?"

"There is no *we*," Ilya repeated. "Stop saying *we*. I am the one in trouble. I am the one who will figure this out."

"How?"

"Don't worry about it."

Shane's blood boiled.

"Tell me how you're going to fix it."

"I can't tell you that, because I don't know yet," Ilya admitted. "But I will figure it out like always."

Shane could have sworn he heard a record scratch.

"*Like always*," Shane latched on to Ilya's turn-of-phrase. "Has this happened before?"

"Not exactly," Ilya confessed. "But I'm not going to panic yet."

"How are you so calm right now?"

"Because they have nothing on me," Ilya said.

Shane's eyes narrowed. "Don't they? They know we're hooking up."

"So what if they know," Ilya asked rhetorically. "You denied it. They can't prove it. Unless they somehow have a video of us fucking."

Why did Shane have to love a man who was so endlessly frustrating?

"Is there a video of us fucking," Shane genuinely asked.

"No," Ilya said.

Shane still had some reservations.

"How many students have you slept with?"

Ilya lifted his shoulders.

"Well?"

"A dozen," Ilya estimated. "Maybe thirteen or fourteen, somewhere around there."

That was actually a lot less than Shane thought it would be.

"Oh," Shane said, suddenly intrigued. "Seriously?"

Ilya nodded in agreement.

"That's actually not as bad as I was thinking," Shane admitted.

They smiled at each other.

"You are very cute," Ilya tried flirting, but Shane's guard was still mostly up.

"Don't try me Rozanov," Shane said, holding back a smirk.

"Let's just wait and see if anything even comes of this," Ilya suggested.

"You really think they'd just let it go?"

Shane hadn't gotten the impression that the administration was planning on dropping the issue anytime soon.

"It's not like we're the first professor and student to have sex," Ilya said logically. "I had sex with my professor."

"Of course you did," Shane said with condemnation.

"You're one to judge," Ilya said sarcastically.

Shane supposed that was comment was fair.

He couldn't stop thinking about all the possible scenarios that could play out.

"What if they start interviewing the other students you slept with?"

"They won't," Ilya said confidently.

"How do you know?"

"No one wants to talk about this stuff," Ilya said casually, like he had all the answers. "It makes them uncomfortable. Sex makes people uncomfortable. They will want an excuse to sweep it under the rug."

That's not what it sounded like to Shane when he was sitting in that chair being told how "brave" he was.

"Look, I don't know what things were like when you were in school," Shane started, "But they take this shit seriously now."

Then Shane thought about the lack of consequences for men like Dallas. How easy it was for bad men to get away with abuse because they happened to be mildly talented.

"Or at least they pretend to," Shane added.

Ilya did his best to quell Shane's fears.

"I have been in this world much longer than you," Ilya said. "I know how these things work."

"And I'm *telling you*," Shane doubled-down, "I could tell that they really wanted me to throw you under the bus today."

Ilya's top lip twitched. Was Shane finally getting through to him? Or had he just covering up how he felt this whole time to make Shane feel better?

Was Ilya scared?

"But I would never do that to you," Shane assured him. "We're in this together. I'll do whatever I can to protect you."

"That is not your job," Ilya told him.

"Oh, but you can do it for me?"

"Yes," Ilya agreed.

Shane hated him. He fucking hated this beautiful arrogant protective fucking bastard.

"Protecting you is protecting me," Shane said. "I meant what I said. If, god forbid, this becomes public, I'm fucked too. My life is over. So stop talking to me like I don't have a fucking stake in this, because I really do. And it's pissing me off."

Ilya gave him an apologetic look.

"I didn't mean to upset you."

"I'm not upset," Shane uselessly denied it.

"Can we please go to bed?"

Maybe this was as far as the conversation was going to go tonight. They hadn't made very much progress, but at least Ilya had been forced to hear him out.

"If I say yes," Shane bargained, "Will you promise to let me in? Tell me the truth and stop shutting me out?"

As he was talking, Ilya's foot found its way to Shane's lap under the table.

"Ilya don't," Shane said firmly.

Ilya curled his toes around Shane's bulge.

"Don't do what?"

"Are you seriously still turned on?"

It was completely bizarre. Not only was Ilya's entire future currently at stake, but he had literally ejaculated less than ten minutes ago.

Ilya shrugged. "I feel bad."

"Why?"

“You did not get off,” Ilya explained. "It's unfair."

“Christ,” Shane yelled. “I’m fine. Not everyone needs to come three times a day.”

"But you do," Ilya said in loving mockery.

"Calm down."

Ilya took that as a cue to stand up and meet Shane at the other end of the table.

“Now,” Ilya said, glancing down to Shane’s dick, which was becoming less shy by the second, “Are you going to let me take care of this?”

“I’m good,” Shane declined.

“Sweetheart,” Ilya said, palming the outside of Shane’s pants to feel his aching cock. “Have you had this the entire time you’ve been here?”

Shane squirmed at his boyfriend's touch.

“No I haven’t,” he protested. And he absolutely *did not* get turned on watching Ilya jerk off earlier.

“You should have let me help you,” Ilya said.

“I wanted to talk.”

“We are done talking now,” Ilya decided. “I’m not going to leave you like this.”

He carried Shane back to bed and ended the day making love until their bodies were too exhausted to do anything but rest.

Chapter End Notes

was this even hot? idk but i'm glad they finally talked lol

btw are any of you still awake? are you night owls like me?

see you next time :)

Chapter 24: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

please read the updated tags. this chapter will discuss revenge porn.

there are 470 of you subscribed! that jumped from the last chapter. if you're a new subscriber, say hi and let me know if you're enjoying the story so far :)

i just handed in an assignment so i had to post another chapter, and it's not even the middle of the night this time (at least where i am)!

we're over 85k words! i can't believe that i've basically written the length of a novel. i want to pat myself on the back because regardless of how good the writing is or how many people read it, that feels like a big accomplishment in and of itself. i truly feel like this story could go on forever, and while it will be sad for me when its over, i also don't want it to go on indefinitely if that makes sense? i don't want to overstay my welcome, and i want to stop torturing the characters because i really do love them so much.

at the same time, i am really excited to see shane take some power back in his life and eventually get some revenge on some of these loser men. i go back and forth on how that will happen, since shitty men are so rarely held accountable in real life, so we'll see. i don't know if you guys have any thoughts on that but i would be interested to hear them.

at the end of the day, i just hope people enjoy reading this story as much as i've enjoyed getting to write it.

love y'all

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

Ilya's sex drive had always been a burden, but lately nothing could satisfy him. Poor Shane was trying his best to keep up with Ilya's sexual demands, but it was quickly becoming a full time job.

Who could blame Ilya for being a little extra needy? Especially since his boyfriend was young and hot and always so eager to please. Not only that, but Ilya was under a lot of stress recently. And sometimes his libido increased when he was in the midst of a stressful situation.

Despite what he kept telling Shane, Ilya was more than a little worried about the anonymous complaint. The new university administration was fundamentally different from the old guard. The previous Dean was an older man who had been pillar of the institution for decades. He hated any hint of controversy and was always happy to turn a blind eye to his professors' lapses in judgment. But the new Dean was a younger woman who was less inclined to look the other way. Ilya hadn't had much interaction with her, and when he did, he got the distinct sense that she was not his biggest fan.

He asked Svetlana to keep her ear to the ground for any rumours about him and Shane from the professors or students. She was more plugged-in to the university gossip pipeline, and she was his greatest asset at fighting any allegations that arose before they turned into anything.

As for the state of his relationship with Shane, after a tense discussion last night things were very much looking up this morning.

Ilya woke up without setting an alarm, and Shane was still in his bed and had nowhere else to be, which meant that his day was already starting off better than usual.

Shane's boxers were around his ankles and Ilya was straddling him with one hand on his shoulder and the other on Shane's dick.

"I can't," Shane groaned into the abyss of Ilya's mouth. "There's nothing left."

"I think you can," Ilya encouraged. "Come on, just one more."

Shane eyes burned into Ilya's, cursing him for what he was asking Shane to do. "I can't come again," he said, adamant.

"And I'm telling you that you can," Ilya said.

Ilya knew Shane's body better than Shane did. He knew his limits and he would never go beyond them, but he definitely stretched them on occasion.

Shane's expression quickly turned from irritation to panic when it was clear that he was in fact capable of coming for a second time in the ten minutes.

"There you go," Ilya said, taking stock of Shane's impending orgasm. "Let it happen."

Shane gritted his teeth and closed his eyes. "I can't—*oh shit*—fuck I'm coming. Ilya, I'm coming."

Shane's mouth flew open at the moment of climax.

There was barely any fluid that shot out of Shane's dick. The small residual volume just dribbled out, politely trickling down Ilya's fingers.

"Good, sweetheart. Relax you are done," Ilya told him. "For now," he added.

Ilya pushed the tiny damp hairs out of Shane's face.

Shane threw his head back on the bed. "I hate you."

Ilya smiled. "You're always so sassy afterwards." He dismounted from Shane so that he could clean himself up.

Once Shane's boxers were back on, he turned to Ilya and stared at him.

"What?"

"Nothing," Shane said. Clearly it wasn't nothing.

"You want more," Ilya asked.

"No," Shane said with his entire body weight behind it. "Please, no."

Ilya loved him so much it was stupid.

"I wish you could see the face you make when you come," Ilya told him. "You would see exactly why I'm so obsessed with you."

"I don't think I want to see that," Shane said back.

The fact that he was so uncomfortable with his own pleasure only endeared Ilya to him even more.

"Not that I'm complaining," Shane said, and Ilya's heart sank a little. "But we haven't gotten out of bed in the past twenty-four hours. I think I'm beginning to forget what it's like to breathe fresh air."

"That can't be true," Ilya tried to deflect.

Was it fucked up that Ilya was already thinking about having sex again? He had jerked Shane off twice this morning and he was already thinking about trying for a third.

"You know I love having sex with you," Shane said gently. "And I'm not saying that I want to stop, but I miss seeing my friends. I think I should spend the day with them."

Ilya hated this part of a relationship where after the sex was over they always had to talk. He hated talking. He wished that he could keep fucking Shane on an endless loop so that they never had to speak to each other in full sentences ever again.

"I understand," Ilya said. It was wrong for him to keep Shane away from his friends. "You should go home."

Shane's eyes were sparkly and pleading. "Is that okay?"

Shane didn't need Ilya's permission. It was his life.

"If that is what you want, then sure."

"I'm not leaving forever," Shane assured him. "I just need a break."

That was understandable Ilya supposed. Not everyone's sexual appetites were as insatiable as his.

"I get it."

"Are you mad at me," Shane asked, highly attuned to any subtle shift in Ilya's mood.

Ilya kissed Shane's forehead lovingly.

"Never," he promised. "What is that saying? Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Shane kissed him hard, driving his tongue into his mouth, making it clear how much he still wanted this even if he needed an entire day away from him.

"Yeah," Shane agreed. "It'll only make me want you more. Then our time together will be more special."

Ilya hadn't realized that what they were doing wasn't special.

"Okay," Ilya said simply. "Then it's settled."

"We probably shouldn't text or call each other either," Shane suggested. "That way we can really focus on whatever we're doing while we're not together."

That rule seemed kind of silly, but it's what Shane wanted and so Ilya agreed to those terms.

"Sure," Ilya said. "I can do that."

Shane pouted and exaggeratedly batted his eyelashes until Ilya kissed him again.

Shane detached his lips from Ilya's. "And then tomorrow I'll let you do whatever you want to me," Shane teased.

"Don't make promises you can't keep," Ilya said in jest.

"I'm gonna get dressed," Shane informed him as he sat up. "Then I'll shower."

"I need to shower too," Ilya said boldly.

Shane shot him a look. "I meant alone," he clarified. "Actually, I think I'll just wait until I get back to campus."

Shane bounced out of bed, excited to get away from him. Or at least that's how Ilya felt.

Ilya had always been good with people. He prided himself on his desirability. He thrived on being around people, charming them, making them laugh. More than anything, it was about proving his worth to other people so that he could believe it himself. If other people accepted him, then he must be doing something right. If women wanted to sleep with him, then there must be something about him that was worth investing in.

If Shane was going to be social, then Ilya was going to do the same - starting with meeting Marleau for lunch. He texted him that morning to see if he was free and he said that he was, but only after twelve-thirty. The place Marleau decided on required a reservation and Ilya requested a table in the back because it was more private, which was necessary since he had some things he wanted to talk about that required discretion.

This lunch served a dual purpose, catching up with his old pal, and drilling him for information about the investigation. Ilya knew that he was in trouble. Rumours were one thing, they could be managed. He could still have plausible deniability. But making a formal complaint was a step further. Once a complaint was filed, there was a chain of command and an institutional process that had to be followed. And that meant that more people were going to find out, and it also meant more opportunities for them to dig into his past. Even though Ilya was confident that he was on good terms with most of his previous semester affairs, he couldn't be sure exactly what would come out of an investigation like that.

"Hey Roz," Marleau said as he jogged over to their table, lightly sun-kissed and smiling. He had been golfing all morning.

"How was the course?"

"Eh," Marleau shrugged. "It was okay."

Ilya kept his menu open as Marleau pulled out his chair and took a seat.

"Are you sure you can still be seen with me," Ilya said sarcastically but mixed with self-pity. "I am not contagious?"

"Cut the shit, Roz," Marleau said. "You know I'm not gonna abandon you, right?"

Ilya said nothing in response, but it felt really good to hear he had someone in his corner.

"What do they serve here?"

"Eighty dollar steak," Ilya said, flipping the pages. "Hundred dollar steak."

"Do they have anything without meat," Marleau asked.

Ilya scowled. "Why?"

"I'm trying out being vegetarian."

"Why," Ilya repeated.

"My girlfriend doesn't eat meat," Marleau said. Ilya applauded himself for not pointing out the obvious innuendo. "And she says she's happier. So I thought maybe I should try it."

The words coming out of his friend's mouth made no sense.

The server came over with their waters. She set them down carefully on the table before pulling out a pen and a notepad from her pocket. "Do you guys want anything else to drink?"

She was young enough to be one of his students. She had blond hair and freckles on her nose.

"Vodka," Ilya said.

She looked concerned.

"I don't think we have that."

"He's joking," Marleau said.

"Sorry, I'm not very funny," Ilya said, and the pink hue in her cheeks deepened. "Water's fine."

She rebounded quickly. "Are you ready to order? I can tell you the specials."

"Do you have anything vegan?"

The woman seemed confused. "I don't think so."

"We'll both have the ribeye," Ilya ordered for his friend.

"Medium rare," she said as a formality.

"Yes," Ilya answered for them both. There was no other proper way to eat a steak.

"Twelve ounce or sixteen?"

"Sixteen," Ilya said.

"Twelve," Marleau cut in.

"Sounds good." She scribbled down a couple words before leaving. "I'll go put that in now."

"Thank you."

"Thanks."

Ilya took sip of his water as he watched her walk away.

"Dude," Marleau said.

Ilya's eyes darted back to the table. He shrugged. "What?"

"You're married," Marleau reminded him, as if Ilya could ever forget. He glanced down at Ilya's left hand. "Where's your ring?"

That was weird. Ilya must not have remembered to put it on again after Shane left. Normally when he took his ring off, it felt like there was a weight missing from his hand. But today he hadn't noticed a difference.

"I think I lost it," Ilya said.

"How?"

"I don't know."

"Well when did you last have it?"

Last night? Ilya was pretty sure he had taken it off before Shane came over.

"I don't know," Ilya said again.

"Won't she freak out if you're not wearing it?"

Ilya had no idea what Svetlana would do. He hadn't seen her in two days, which was a lot longer than he usually wanted to go without seeing his wife.

"It's a cheap thing anyway," Ilya reasoned. "I can buy a new one."

"Haven't you had it for like ten years," Marleau said. "Isn't it sentimental or something?"

"It's just a ring."

It really was just a ring. It only meant something if he decided that it meant something.

Kind of like a marriage license.

Half an hour later when the server came back with their food, Ilya deliberately ignored her as much as possible without seeming impolite.

Marleau started eating right away, and Ilya took the opportunity of him having his mouth full to ask a question.

"Do you know if they're going to want to talk to me," Ilya asked.

Marleau kept chewing. There was no way it was taking that long to chew one bite of steak.

"I have no idea," he said, dashing Ilya's hopes of collection any information. "I'm not involved in that stuff. I can't be involved, since you and I are friends."

Damn it.

What was the point of having a friend in high places if they couldn't even feed you intel?

"Well have you *heard* anything," Ilya asked, still leaving his food untouched.

"A little," Marleau said vaguely. "I heard that they interviewed one student and that they apparently didn't want to talk."

That was basically what Shane had already told him, but it was good to have confirmation from an outside source.

Marleau changed the subject after that to talk about where he was planning to take his girlfriend on vacation when he had a few weeks of holiday in August, which turned into Ilya talking about where he went on his honeymoon with Svetlana.

"Boston? You took her to Boston for your honeymoon?"

"We had no money," Ilya said. "And she likes it there."

"Now that you're older, why don't you take her somewhere nice?"

Ilya had taken Svetlana on many fancy trips since they were young, broke students, but none of them were as exciting as their honeymoon in Boston.

"Maybe," Ilya said just to drop the subject.

Ilya practically inhaled his lunch. He had been starving for the past couple days because he was only eating whatever Shane wanted to eat. By the time he was finished, Ilya had been forced to unbutton his pants in order to breathe.

When the server brought over the cheque, Marleau put down his credit card immediately. Ilya made an awkward joke about Marleau offering to pay.

"Why, because I'm going to be unemployed soon?"

"No, because I can write this off as a business meeting."

"We didn't discuss any business."

"Close enough."

Ilya walked Cliff to his car and they did that thing that men do sometimes where they awkwardly half-hug. Then Cliff pulled him in for an actual hug, and said "I'm here for you man," which felt like a bad omen.

Ilya stopped by his office after lunch to pick up some papers that he left on his desk, but as he walked through the halls, he couldn't help but feel like he was living in a fishbowl being observed by the outside world, scrutinizing every one of his movements.

Knowing that Shane was somewhere around here, maybe even in the same building, made Ilya's heart skip a beat.

Ilya hated to admit it but Shane was right about them spending time apart. Being away from each other gave Ilya's mind time to wander. This way he could imagine what Shane was doing, and his imagination was usually more exciting than reality. He pictured Shane with his friends, laughing, hanging out, talking about things that he wouldn't understand. He thought about Shane being around people who weren't him, and he wasn't jealous. He felt comforted by the knowledge that Shane had his own life independent of him. Shane was so much more than Ilya's lover, he was smart and likeable and gorgeous and he may have been the most talented person Ilya had ever met. Ilya wouldn't have been attracted to someone that didn't have their own interests.

Ilya had always felt at home on campus ever since he was eighteen and first set foot in Canada. He loved spending his time reading in the libraries, sitting outside and writing and daydreaming. The campus environment felt stimulating and alive in a way that he hadn't experienced before.

Ilya really did love teaching. More importantly, it was something he was good at. He may not have been as highly regarded as some of the other professors at the university or published as many peer-reviewed articles or been well-known in his field, but he was passionate, and that passion went a long way with the students.

The relationship between a professor and their students was a fragile one. It required a careful negotiation of power and a certain degree of trust on both sides. It demanded mutual respect

from each of the parties. Ilya wasn't sure how he was supposed to continue teaching if that trust had been broken on such a public scale.

Ilya would never hurt a student, and the idea that anyone could think that he was capable of such a thing made him irrationally angry. He cared for every one of his students. And sometimes the connection between intellectual curiosity and sexual curiosity became blurred. But he would never do anything to hurt any of them. He took his responsibility as an educator extremely seriously. More seriously than many of the other professors who hardly took any interest in their students lives.

The simple fact is that Ilya didn't believe in denying young people their autonomy. He had too much respect for them to ever do that. For many of them, being at college was their first experience being away from home, free from parental supervision and the overbearingness of their youth. It wasn't Ilya's place to try to act as a parent to his students. He could guide them and educate them, but he would not tell them what rules to follow. As long as they were adults, they had the ability to make their own choices. To attempt to control their sexuality or tell them where to channel it, to place restrictions on their desires, would be fundamentally opposed to the purpose of education. Even if he made the decision to keep his students at arms length and reject any sexual advance, that wouldn't negate the truth that sex existed everywhere, including in the classroom, including in workplaces. You could try to make rules to keep sex at bay, but the nature of sexuality was such that you could never erase it completely.

He ended up spending the afternoon working before heading out around four-thirty. Svetlana had agreed to make plans to eat dinner together, which seemed like a rare event these days.

She texted him a list of groceries she required for the recipe she wanted them to attempt to make together, and he swung by the store. When he came up in the driveway, her car was already parked. He pulled in and parked behind her.

When he finally walked in the front door to their home, it was quiet.

"Svetlana," he said, dropping the bags on the counter without putting the groceries away.

"Sveta, are you here? I saw your car outside."

He couldn't find her. Maybe he should check the bedroom. She could have decided to shower before dinner, but he didn't hear any running water. Usually she preferred to shower in the mornings anyway.

He walked through the kitchen down the hallway into the living room to see his wife sitting on the couch with her hands on her lap staring at the wall like she was paralyzed. She turned to face him and he saw the streaks of mascara under her eyes.

"Ilya," Svetlana said, failing to hide her disdain for him.

She threw her phone down on the coffee table.

"I thought you were smarter than this."

Ilya had no idea what she was talking about.

"Smarter than what?"

She wiped her tears, which only further smudged her makeup.

"Tell me why there's a video of your dick on my fucking phone."

What was she talking about? He didn't send her any video.

Ilya's silence only fuelled her anger.

“See for yourself,” she said, harshly sliding it across the table for his viewing.

He gingerly walked over to the table, picked up her phone and held it to his face.

Holy shit. No. That was impossible.

His eyes were lying to him.

It wasn't just a video of Ilya's dick. His dick was *inside* someone. Inside Shane. Although thankfully you couldn't tell who they were from the video.

"You think I don't know what your dick looks like after all these years?" She shook her head in disgust. "I've known since we were fifteen. That's not something you forget."

The video was only twenty-three seconds long. It was edited deliberately. But why only that part of the video, Ilya wondered.

"It's zoomed in," Svetlana said. "You can't see your faces. But I knew that penis belonged to my husband."

Ilya looked at the background of the video. A grey brick wall. It was Shane's dorm room.

Just from the shape of their bodies alone, it was obvious that it was two men.

"How did you get this? Did someone send this to you?"

"Some stupid twitter account," she answered. "I only heard about it today in a meeting with a couple other faculty members. Apparently they take submissions."

"Submissions of what?"

"Students at the university having sex," she said.

"Why?"

"Because they can," Svetlana replied. "Because people are cruel and stupid... Honey, don't read the comments," she said when Ilya's thumb began scrolling.

"Why not? Do they know it's me?"

"No, that's not- just don't," Svetlana warned. "It's gross."

Ilya heard his own low growls and moans coming from the phone's speaker and they made his stomach churn.

"Do you hear me say his name," Ilya asked, still looking down at the screen, watching at the lower half of his body as the version of him in the video thrusts over and over again.

"There's not a whole lot of talking," she said, which out of context was actually a pretty funny answer. "You say you're going to come and then it cuts out."

"What the fuck," Ilya yelled once the gravity of the situation settled in. "How do I delete it?"

"You can't," she said. "I've been reporting for the past two hours and nothing's working."

"They can't just post this," Ilya said, his heart beating faster. "I'll sue them. I'll- I'll fucking kill whoever did this."

Svetlana just sat there frozen while Ilya paced around the living room.

"How can they do that," Ilya asked.

"They have entire websites dedicated to shit like this," Svetlana informed him. "Usually its pictures of women."

"Why would anyone do something like this?"

"Humiliation," Svetlana suggested. "They want revenge. Usually it's a former boyfriend or girlfriend who wants to get her back at their partner for leaving them and moving on."

"But how did they even get a video of us?"

"I assumed you recorded it," Svetlana said, still seemingly unsure what to think about all this new conflicting information coming at her at once.

"Well I didn't," Ilya said. "I promise. I'm not dumb. "

Svetlana didn't say anything. He needed to do something to get her back on his side.

"You believe me, don't you," he asked, terrified. He tried to appeal to her fierce sense of loyalty. "I'm your husband, Sveta."

She talked slowly, rationally. She was the calm to counteract Ilya's restlessness.

"Did you see a camera," she asked.

Ilya's heart became lighter when he realized she believed him.

"No, of course not," Ilya said. "I don't check every room I enter for a camera."

Svetlana asked a question that Ilya was not looking forward to answering.

"Where even are you guys in the video?"

Ilya hesitated. She was going to hate him for this.

"Shane's dorm," Ilya said, ripping the bandaid off.

Her entire face and neck tightened. She was pissed. She had every right to be.

"Ilya," she said angrily.

"I know, I know," Ilya agreed. "I fucked up."

"You really did," she confirmed. "I don't know how you're going to get yourself or of this one."

Ilya didn't know either, and that terrified him.

"I'll start by finding the person that did this," Ilya said.

"The police are already investigating whose is behind the actual account, but that doesn't mean they'll be able to figure out who submitted each video."

Well, that was just great.

"Is it possible that Shane would have recorded you guys," she asked. "Did you two ever talk about doing something like that?"

"He's not that stupid," Ilya said quickly. He didn't even have to think about it for more than half a second to know that Shane couldn't have done this.

"Are you sure?"

She didn't say it in an accusatory way, but Ilya was still insulted on Shane's behalf. If she knew Shane like he did, she would never suspect that he was capable of that.

"Yes I'm sure," Ilya said firmly.

"Could it have been a prank," she went to the next most plausible option. "Did someone on the hockey team set up a camera in Shane's room? Maybe it's a hazing thing."

Ilya had played hockey in his youth. He remembered how fucked up the hazing could get and how often it involved some flavour of sexual humiliation. But he wasn't part of this generation, he didn't grow up with very much social media, so he didn't know if this was something they would do. He also knew that Shane had problems with at least one of the guys on his team. Whatever his name was, the guy that Shane punched that one time.

"Maybe," Ilya agreed. The thought alone nearly made him want to burst into tears. Poor Shane. "God this is so fucking fucked."

"You need to tell him," Svetlana said. "If he doesn't already know."

"I can't tell him about this," Ilya said. "It will kill him. He'll have a heart attack."

"Either you tell him or he's going to stumble across it some other way."

Ilya was resolute in his decision.

"No, I can't. It will ruin him. He's too fragile right now."

"Ilya," she said, appealing to his sounder judgment. "What if the camera's still there?"

"I will take care of the camera," Ilya promised. "I'll find it."

She was flabbergasted. "Absolutely not, that's a horrible idea. You are not going anywhere near that boy's dorm ever again."

"I'll be more careful this time."

"Fuck no," Svetlana shouted. "Listen to me. Do you really think that the only thing they recorded was you two having sex? Who knows what other recordings there are of Shane. They intruded into the privacy of his own bedroom. He deserves to know. This affects his life more than it does yours."

Ilya was annoyed by her advocacy, but also grateful that she seemed to be looking out for Shane as much as she was protecting him.

She looked at him with pity. "Shit. Ilya, what are we going to do?"

We.

They were a *we* again.

"I mean," he said before taking a long pause to consider his options. Ilya was too exhausted to formulate a solid strategy. "This could be good for us, maybe."

"What do you mean?"

Ilya thought about it a bit more. "That video is illegal,' Ilya said, ramping up to make a point. "And if the person who recorded that video is the same person that made the complaint against me, then that person committed a crime, right?"

Svetlana nodded along. "I guess so."

"Then they can't possibly be a credible person. And then the administration will have no choice but to dismiss it."

Svetlana seemed to be following his logic and find it acceptable.

"But how do we figure out who took the video?"

Unbeknownst to either Ilya or Svetlana, Shane had spent the majority of his afternoon uncovering that exact mystery.

Chapter End Notes

i'm sorry if this chapter is too dark for some of you. but this is going to set up the revenge arc for shane and we're taking down all these fucking guys.

see you all soon ❤️

Chapter 25: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey everyone ❤️

okay i felt so bad after the last chapter so i'm posting this early. i really hope this makes up for it!

also farewell to the four subscribers that i lost, i get why the last chapter may have been too much for some people

there will be some discussions of SA and revenge porn in this chapter. please read the tags (you should always read the tags because they may update).

shane hollander revenge tour 2026 starts now!

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

Shane hadn't had a proper sleep in days.

He told Ilya that he wanted some time away because he hadn't seen his friends in a while, which was partially true, but he also needed time to decompress. He couldn't think straight when he was around Ilya.

Having space would be good for Ilya too. Something was going on with him. The past couple days he had been in some kind of sexual trance and he needed to snap out of it.

Shane got back to his dorm room and slumped into bed. He rolled over on his side.

He saw his birthday gift from Rose on his desk, still unopened. He reached into the bag and pulled out the card.

He opened it to find a heartfelt message in Rose's elegant handwriting.

Shane,

You're finally as old as me!

I'm so glad that I met you last semester because now I can't imagine my life without you. You are one of the most intelligent people I've ever met and you always do the right thing even when it's hard. I know in my heart that you will go on to do amazing things with your life.

p.s. all I ask is that you remember me when you're famous.

Love your best friend (and possibly your future wife),

Rose

Shane's heart swelled. That was so thoughtful of her. She really didn't need to do that.

He considered sending off a quick text to thank her, but it didn't quite feel like enough. So he decided to go to Rose's room to surprise her and see if she had plans for the rest of the day.

He wrapped his knuckles and knocked on the door. There was no answer.

"Rose," he called inside. "It's Shane."

She was probably still sleeping. "Rose, can I come in?"

He leaned in and thought he heard a soft noise. Was it a laugh?

"Rose," Shane said again. "I can hear you in there."

She had given him a key for emergencies but this didn't feel like an emergency. He pressed down on the door handle to find that the door was not locked. It clicked and he opened the

door.

Rose's breasts were out and she was fully grinding on top of a woman. Thankfully their bodies were mostly covered by a blanket, but there was no mistaking what they were doing before he walked in.

"What the fuck," the woman under Rose screamed.

Shane covered his eyes. "I'm sorry. I knocked. I'm sorry."

"Shane?" Rose turned her head and laughed. "Oh my god that's hilarious."

He heard shuffling and then Rose said, "You can open your eyes."

Shane hesitantly removed his hand from over his face and blinked a few times. Rose had maneuvered herself so that she was sitting against the headboard next to the woman and had pulled the blankets over them both.

That's when he saw the face of the other woman.

"Lily?"

She was more sweaty than usual, but Shane would recognize that dirty blond hair and green eye combination anywhere. It was Rose's roommate.

Lily waved innocently while holding the blanket to her chest.

"Hi Shane," she said awkwardly. "Nice to see you again."

Shane was having trouble processing this.

“You two are...”

“Yes,” Rose said.

“But I thought you were...”

“Straight,” Lily asked.

“Yeah.”

“So did I,” Lily agreed.

Rose was blushing, it was so weird. He had never seen her act nervous around a woman before.

Shane didn't know what to say.

“How long have you guys been together?”

Rose looked to Lily for confirmation before she answered.

“A week,” she said like it was a question.

“Eight days,” Lily corrected.

Rose lowered her voice. “You were counting?”

Shane's eyes darted back and forth between the two women, and then he realized about ten seconds too late that he needed to get the hell out.

"Cool, so I'm gonna go now," Shane decided. "But I'm happy for you guys. Sorry for barging in."

Shane turned to leave until Rose called after him.

"Wait," she halted him. "Why are you here?"

Shane almost forgot.

"Right, sorry, I wanted to thank you for the card, and yeah. I guess I should have just texted you."

Rose nodded. "Where have you been? I haven't seen you in forever. You never responded to my texts last night."

"I was..." Shane looked at Lily. "You know what, we can talk later. Sorry again Lily."

"No worries," she said awkwardly.

"You better text me," Rose warned him.

"I will," Shane said with one foot out the door. 'Bye.'

He speed-walked down the hallway as fast as he could. That was so embarrassing. It definitely was not how he wanted to start his day. But at least he knew that Rose was happy, and he felt slightly less guilty for not texting her back.

When he entered the locker room, Troy and J.J. were huddled in the corner watching something on J.J.'s phone.

They didn't even bother to look up and greet him when he walked in.

"Everything okay," Shane asked. Knowing this team, there was always something weird going on. Always a new fire he was expected to put out.

J.J. turned the phone around and Shane caught a glimpse of two naked bodies and quickly averted his gaze.

"Ew, I don't want to see that."

"Really, we thought this might be more up your alley," J.J. joked.

Why would they think Shane would be interested in watching porn in public with other guys?

"Why are you watching porn in the locker room?"

"Do you think we know them," Troy asked.

“I doubt it,” J.J. said. “Maybe Shane does.”

This was getting really annoying.

“What are you idiots talking about?”

“Nothing,” Troy said, seemingly offput by J.J.’s throwaway comment. “You can tell it was recorded in one of the dorms here.”

Oh god that’s horrible, Shane thought. Who would put something like that on the internet?

“You really shouldn’t be watching that,” Shane chastised. “The girl in the video wouldn’t want you guys watching it. How do you know if she knew she was being recorded?”

If Rose could see him right now, she’d be proud of the way he had taken up the mantle for women’s rights.

“There’s no girl,” J.J. said.

They had to be kidding.

“You guys are watching gay porn,” he asked in a higher than normal tone. “Why?”

Even Shane didn’t watch gay porn and he was actually gay. To be fair, he didn’t watch any kind of porn, but still, straight guys watching two men going at it was strange right?

“It’s got 10,000 views.”

"Is that a lot," Shane asked. He wasn't very active on social media.

"Depends," J.J. said.

Hayden walked in with a towel around his waist and hair still damp.

"Hey man," he said to Shane. "Can you do something for me?"

Shane's brain was still moving a little slow after what just happened.

"Sure."

"Jackie wants me to go to this fancy dinner with her parents this weekend."

"Okay," Shane said, unsure what that had to do with him.

"I have this tie that Jackie says really brings out my eyes."

Shane was still lost.

"Good for you," Shane said.

"No, dude, I can't find it. I was wondering if you could maybe take a look around and see if I left it in our room?"

"Oh," Shane said. Why didn't he just say that? "Sure, I can look. I can't promise anything."

Hayden pushed his luck. "And maybe well you're there anyway, can you pack up some of my stuff for me to pick up?"

He couldn't think of anything he would rather do less than spend his afternoon packing up Hayden's junk.

"Why can't you do it," Shane asked.

"I'm busy," Hayden said.

"With what," Shane asked. There was no way that Hayden was busier than Shane, who was currently juggling hockey, a married boyfriend and a midterm next Monday that he was woefully underprepared for.

"Husband things," Hayden said and Shane raised a disgruntled eyebrow. "You wouldn't understand because you're still single."

Insulting Shane's relationship status didn't seem like a good idea if he was trying to get a favour of out him.

"Think of it as your wedding gift to us," Hayden reasoned.

"I already gave you your wedding gift."

"Okay then a gift for Jackie's bridal shower that she didn't get."

"Sure, fine," Shane begrudgingly agreed. "But you owe me."

"You're the best," Hayden patted Shane on the back and went to get dressed.

Shane decided to hit the showers before anyone else could ask him for anything.

The first thirty minutes of Shane's afternoon were stolen by Hayden's request. But it was worth it to Shane to help Hayden impress his in-laws. He needed him and Jackie to work out, because he was not planning on choosing sides if there was a divorce.

Shane was packing up some of Hayden's stuff to send off to his new apartment, when his eyes were drawn to a framed photo of him and Rose that lived on his shelf. In the photo, Rose had her arms around him and was hugging him from behind. It was from their first week of school. They'd only known each other for a few days when the photo was taken, but you'd think they'd been friends for twenty years.

He picked it up and dusted it off while admiring their smiling faces. He seemed so happy back then.

As he was setting it down, the back of the frame seemed to be unstable. He should have anticipated the lack of quality considering that it was the cheapest one he could find at Walmart. It was probably time for a replacement anyway.

He flipped it over and unfastened the hinges. When he pulled on it slightly, the frame broke apart completely and Shane noticed that something landed on the ground. He looked down between his feet and there was a tiny black square. He picked it up and inspected it.

That's when he saw the lens. It was a fucking camera. No longer than three centimetres in diameter. It couldn't have been placed there by accident. Someone meant to hide a camera in that frame. Which meant that someone was spying on him.

That's when Shane had the horrific realization that the frame was directly facing his bed.

It didn't take him too long to come up with a list of suspects, considering that there was only one name on the list.

That fucking pervert.

That fucking possessive piece of shit.

When could he have done it? Where was the opportunity?

Shane vaguely remembered one morning that he had run out the door for practice and Ben stayed behind. He should have never left him stay in his room alone. But who would ever think to do something this fucking insane?

Ben, that was who.

Was he really crazy enough that he would do something like this? Clearly he had issues. He sucked as a person. But this was illegal. It was surveillance. Voyeurism. Revenge porn.

Holy fuck.

That must have been how Ben knew that he was having sex with Ilya on his birthday. He didn't just *happen* to coincidentally see Ilya leaving his room, he saw them on fucking candid camera. He watched them together. He probably got off to it.

Ben was fucking dead. He needed to count his days because Shane was going to bury him.

Shane knew that even after they fought and he said all those horrible things, if he texted Ben and asked him to come over right now, he would come running.

So that's exactly what Shane did. He lay the trap and waited for Ben to come to him.

Shane was waiting patiently for Ben to arrive, holding the camera in his palm. He thought about how to tactically approach the conversation, but as soon as he saw Ben's smug expression he blurted it out immediately.

Shane held up the camera between his thumb and index fingers and the blood drained from Ben's face.

"You spied on me. You recorded me for weeks."

Ben was caught red-handed, and from the look on his face, he knew it.

"I'm sorry," he said, with very little emotion behind it. "I know that I shouldn't have done it."

Well that was easy.

"That's all you have to say for yourself? You were fucking live-streaming my bedroom for weeks and that's all you have to say?"

He shrugged. Was he stoned? This was not a normal human response to being accused of hiding a secret camera in a picture frame to spy on some guy you're sleeping with.

"This is illegal," Shane told him, but Ben should have already known that. "You know that right? You can't put fucking cameras in people's bedrooms without telling them."

Ben suddenly didn't feel like talking.

"I told you, I'm sorry."

"That's not good enough," Shane said.

"Well I don't know what else to say."

"If you don't tell me what the hell is going on, right now, I'm going to the police and they'll deal with it."

Shane was mostly bluffing. He didn't want to go to the police. He didn't want anyone outside of this room to know that a sex tape even existed. He couldn't play in the NHL if people knew he was in porn. Not just porn, *gay* porn. They wouldn't care that he didn't record it himself or that he didn't mean for anyone to see it. They wouldn't care that it wasn't consensual, they would just see the words "gay" and "porn" and no team in the entire league would come near him with a five-hundred-foot pole.

"Okay, okay," Ben agreed to talk. "What do you want to know?"

"Did you file the complaint," Shane asked.

"What are you talking about?"

"If you want to keep playing dumb, I'll just go to the police. Because I'm not doing this."

"No, Shane you're not making any sense."

Shane could have gone ballistic.

“I’m not making sense,” Shane asked incredulously. “Go fuck yourself. I know that you did this. You’re so fucking pathetic. No, actually you’re a psychopath.”

“What are you even talking about?” Ben looked confused.

“God, just fucking admit it. You filed the complaint,” Shane asserted. “Are you really so jealous that you would ruin his life just to punish me?”

“Shane,” he said, dead serious. “I don’t know what the hell you’re talking about. I didn’t make any complaint.”

Shane shouldn’t have trusted him, not for a damn second. After everything he did, Shane didn’t owe him anything. But he seemed to actually be genuine for once.

“Then who did,” Shane asked.

“I don’t know,” Ben answered.

“Who else would have had access to the... footage?”

Ben looked like he wanted to say something but couldn’t. *Who was he protecting?*

“If you don’t tell me, then you can tell the police,” Shane warned him. He wasn’t fucking messing around, this was serious.

“Fine,” Ben agreed, like he was doing Shane a favour, rather than the truth, which was that he was trying to avoid accountability. “My ex could have done it. He’s been in here a few times.

He has my passwords. He could have found the videos on my computer.”

Shane snorted. Those two really deserved each other.

“Are you fucking kidding me,” he said, smiling darkly at the absurdity of it all. “So you were fucking him this whole time, but you set up a camera in my room to make sure that I wasn’t fucking anyone else?”

“Yeah,” Ben said simply.

“You and I didn’t use condoms,” Shane pointed out.

“So? He doesn’t have anything.”

Shane was going to commit murder. He was really going to do it. He had never felt the urge to kill someone until this exact moment. Fight, yes. Throw a punch, sure. But he really could throw Ben out a fucking window right now.

“I know it sounds crazy,” Ben said.

“It doesn’t sound crazy, it is fucking crazy. Who does something like that?”

“I was right though,” Ben said, as if that justified the crime he had committed. “You were with someone else.”

“Let me get this straight,” Shane said. “You non-consensually recorded me having sex, and then your boyfriend – who you’re still fucking by the way – found the recording and reported my boyfriend to the university to punish you for sleeping with me?”

Ben shrugged. “What do you want me to say?”

“I want you to tell me if that’s what happened.”

“Maybe,” Ben conceded. “I don’t know.”

Shane couldn’t do anything but stare. He couldn’t move, he couldn’t speak.

“Shane, I’m sorry,” Ben apologized again. “I didn’t mean for it to end like this.”

Ben would never be able to make this up to him. He did the one thing that Shane could never forgive. He hurt Ilya.

“I deleted all the videos a few days ago,” Ben said. “Because I felt bad.”

Was that supposed to make Shane feel better?

“How do I know that you didn’t make a copy or something?”

“I swear I didn’t,” Ben said, as if his word meant anything. As if it carried even one ounce of moral weight.

“Obviously I don’t believe you. And how am I supposed to know that your boyfriend didn’t make a copy?”

“Fuck,” Ben said, finally sounding scared. He should be fucking scared. If Shane had to be scared, Ben should be ten times more afraid.

“What can I do to make this right? Please, I’m so sorry, I’ll do anything.”

Nothing. There was nothing he could do.

Shane was so angry that he couldn’t even enjoy the sight of Ben begging.

Then Shane had an idea. It wasn’t ever going to change what Ben did or make it better, but it was something.

“Get on the bed,” Shane said calmly.

Ben’s eyebrows pinched together. “Why?”

Shane glared at him, providing no answer but also giving him no choice.

“Get on the fucking bed.”

Ben slumped down on the mattress with his legs hanging over the edge.

Shane took his phone out of his pocket, swiped opened the camera and pressed record. He waited until he saw the time begin running at the top of the screen. It was recording.

“Let’s talk,” Shane said.

"You want me to talk into the camera?"

"Wow, you're catching on," Shane said sarcastically. "Now tell them what you did to me," he demanded.

Ben sputtered like a clueless idiot. "What?"

"Start with that night at the party."

"What are you talking about?"

Shane offered no reaction.

"Go ahead, tell them what happened with us that night," Shane coached from behind the camera.

Ben looked into the phone camera like he was hypnotized.

"We had sex."

"No," Shane stopped him before he could keep going. "Try again. Tell them what really happened."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Shane kept the camera fixed on Ben's scared face. He had never been so disgusted by anyone in his entire life.

"Let's start at the beginning," Shane decided. "You got into a fight with your boyfriend. What was the fight about?"

“I don’t even remember,” he claimed.

“Either tell the fucking camera, or tell the police,” Shane gave him the choice. “I don’t give a shit anymore. But you’re telling someone.”

Ben shifted his weight on the bed.

“Fucking hell Shane, is this really necessary?” He ran his hands through his hair nervously. Shane kept his grip on the phone as steady as he possibly could despite the adrenaline rush. “I thought Mike was hitting on some guy, so I called him out. He called me an asshole. Told me I paranoid and that he wasn’t flirting. I didn’t believe him. Then he tried to grab me and so I pushed him, and he dropped a glass and stormed out.”

Shane’s breathing was getting louder.

“And that’s when you met me,” Shane deduced.

While he was smoking weed behind a bush like some kind of creep.

“Yes.”

“Do you remember what you told me?”

“It was a long time ago,” Ben prefaced his answer.

“It was less than a month ago. But that’s okay, you clearly have a bad memory, so I’ll tell you what you said. You said that hockey players are assholes.”

“Okay.”

“Do you think you’re an asshole?”

He rolled his eyes. “I don’t know, Shane.”

Shane got them back on track, walking through the rest of the night as it unfolded.

“Then what happened?”

“You asked me to follow you upstairs.”

“And then?”

“You blew me.”

“Did you finish?”

“What?”

Ben seemed too confused by such an easy question.

“When I was blowing you, did you finish?”

“No.”

“So then what happened?”

"I asked you if you wanted to have sex."

"Wrong," Shane interrupted. "Try again. Get it right this time or I'll leave and you can finish this conversation at the police station."

"I asked you-"

Shane lowered the phone. "We're done here," he said. "If you're not going to tell the truth, then there's no point."

"Wait," Ben begged. "Wait no, please. I'll do it. I'll say whatever you want."

That wasn't what Shane was asking for. He wanted Ben to be honest for once.

"Don't say what you think I want to hear," Shane demanded. "Tell the truth. I want to make sure that you know what you did."

"Okay, fine."

Shane slowly lifted the camera again.

"I'm giving you one last chance so you better not fuck it up," Shane warned him. "Now I'm going to ask you again, what happened next?"

Ben wrung his hands. "Um, I think... I told you to turn around."

That sounded more accurate.

"And then?"

"I asked you to let me fuck you."

"Was that before or after you fingered me?"

"What?"

"I just want to make sure we have the timeline straight. Did you ask me if I wanted to have sex before or after you had already started?"

"I don't remember," he said, shaking his head.

"You really can't remember anything huh," Shane said accusatorially. "Is it all the weed you smoke? Or maybe you just don't want to remember."

"Can you please just put that thing away."

"No," Shane said, undeterred. "So you start fucking me, and what were you thinking? Did it seem like I liked it?"

"Yeah," Ben said, happy to agree with Shane's suggestion.

"Did I say that I liked it?"

"I don't know."

"Then how are you so sure that I did?"

"You seemed like you liked it," Ben reasoned.

Shane's right hand started shaking. He needed to calm down.

"Tell them the truth. What were the words that I actually said to you that night?"

"I don't remember."

"I told you that it hurt," Shane filled in the blank that Ben was unwilling to admit.

Ben gave a non-committal shrug.

"Do you remember that I told you that?"

"Sort of."

Sort of. What kind of an answer was that?

"When I told you it hurt, did you stop," Shane led the answer.

"Shane you told me to fuck you," Ben recalled.

“We’re not talking about that right now,” Shane said, tired of how gracefully Ben seemed to dance around the subject. “When you were inside me and I told you it hurt, did you stop? Or did you keep fucking me?”

Ben rubbed the back of his neck and looked away.

Shane was going to wait for as long as it took for him to admit it. This wasn’t just about getting his confession on video. Shane needed to hear him say it. To acknowledge what happened for the sake of his own sanity.

“The second one.”

“You kept going,” Shane reiterated.

“Yeah, I guess I did.”

Shane lowered the phone and pressed the record button again to stop the recording. The video was two minutes and fifty-six seconds long.

“I want you to know something,” Shane told him. He sounded calm while being anything but calm. “Really listen to me. Because I want you to remember these words for a long time. For the rest of your life.” Shane swallowed. “You are nothing. You mean nothing. You’re a criminal.” Shane gripped the camera tightly. “You only have a future because I say so. I don’t care if no one else ever finds out about this, I will always know what you did. And I hope that fucking haunts you. I hope you walk around for the next fifty years waiting for the day that I expose you to everyone. And when you get married, I want you to remember this conversation. And when you have children, which I truly pray that you don’t, I want you to remember what they would think of you if they ever found out the truth. If they ever learned that their father was a piece of shit who records people having sex and never learned that when someone says ‘it hurts’ that means you *fucking stop!*”

Shane picked up the tiny camera that had been hiding on his shelf for the past two weeks, threw it on the floor in front of him and smashed it under his shoe over and over again until it

broke apart beneath his foot. Then he picked up the pieces and threw them at Ben and they landed on his lap and on the bedsheets.

“You’re dead to me,” Shane said. “If I ever see your face again, I’ll tell the police and the school everything. So you better stay the hell out of my way.”

Shane thought of one last stipulation

“And if I ever find out that you didn’t delete every single last video, or if those recordings ever see the light of day, I’ll fucking ruin you. Because I used to feel sorry for you, but now I don’t even pity you anymore. I look at you and feel nothing but the desire to shove you underneath a moving car. You could be dead and I wouldn’t care. I would be better off.”

Ben didn’t need Shane to order him to get the fuck out, he just got up and left out the door without uttering a word.

Shane was done being nice. It clearly wasn’t getting him anywhere. From now on he was going to be ruthless. Anyone who threatened him or someone he loved was going to pay.

Chapter End Notes

that last scene was inspired by the show tell me lies, which i've been re-watching recently (iykyk)

this chapter was very satisfying for me so i hope you liked it!

also quick question, i’ve been thinking of changing the name of this fic to something more interesting. should i? i’m terrible coming up with titles.

bye :)

Chapter 26: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

it's a slightly shorter chapter today but i really like it so hopefully you guys do too!

i love reading all your comments on the story and hearing your thoughts so keep them coming!

same warnings from last chapter carry over

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

Ilya almost kept his promise not to contact Shane for the whole day. He was so close to making it to the finish line, but ultimately Shane wasn't surprised that Ilya caved. He was honestly hoping that he would.

While it was technically a breach of their pact, when Shane saw the text from Ilya appear on his home screen around eight p.m., he couldn't have cared less about the rules. He just didn't want to be alone right now.

Shane was standing in the living room of Ilya's apartment, scared out of his mind.

"Shane, can you please sit down."

Ilya was infected with a nervous energy that made Shane's heart sink to his feet.

"Oh no, what happened," Shane asked, desperate to know what else could have possibly gotten worse since the last time they saw each other.

Shane had his own bad news to share. Although he wasn't sure yet if he wanted to tell Ilya every last sordid detail. What if Ilya blamed him? Shane could barely stand himself for

sleeping with a guy like Ben. What would Ilya think if he knew that Shane had fucked someone who was now partially responsible for ruining Ilya's life? Didn't that make Shane guilty by association?

"Sit down first," Ilya said.

Shane didn't argue. He sat down on the couch and planted his feet on the floor.

"Do not freak out," Ilya instructed, which only made Shane more likely to freak out.

"Ilya, please tell me what happened," Shane begged, incapable of masking the fear buzzing through him. "You're scaring me."

Had Ilya been fired? Shane knew that he totally botched that interview with the Dean. This was all his fault.

"It is not the end of the world," Ilya reiterated. "But there is a video of us that was posted online."

Oh no. Oh god no, this can't be happening.

He thought he had taken care of it.

Ilya kept talking as Shane spiralled. He only caught about half of what Ilya said.

"You can't see either of our faces," Ilya assured him. "No one knows that the video is of you and me."

"Fuck," Shane interjected. "I knew it."

Ilya's eyes widened in surprise. "You've seen it?"

Shane shook his head. "No, but I think I know where this is going."

Ilya seemed confused by Shane's reaction.

"Never mind," Shane said. "Keep going with what you were saying."

"No, what is it," Ilya asked, refusing to continue.

He had come this far. He had no real choice but to tell the truth now.

"I found a camera in my room," Shane admitted. "It had been there for a couple weeks."

Ilya's upper lip twitched with anger. If he was angry at Shane, he had probably earned it.

"Why did you not tell me?"

"I just found it today," Shane told him. "It was hidden in a shitty picture frame. But that's not the point."

"What is the point?" Ilya exploded. "Please talk faster."

Shane's thoughts were so jumbled it was difficult to know how to piece the words together correctly.

“Remember how I told you that I slept with someone else when we were apart?”

Ilya’s hand squeezed into a fist at his side.

“Of course, I remember.”

“He’s not a good guy,” Shane said, keeping the details vague.

“Clearly,” Ilya said, quickly catching on.

Shane still hadn’t seen the video yet. Until a minute ago, he was letting himself believe that it had been deleted and lost forever.

“Can I see the video,” Shane asked.

Ilya sighed and put his hands in his pockets. “I don’t know if that’s a good idea.”

Ilya was probably right, but Shane’s curiosity was going to rip him apart if he didn’t see it for himself.

”Please,” Shane said. “I need to know how bad it is.”

Ilya pulled his phone out of his right pocket, typed in his password and hesitantly handed Shane the phone.

Shane turned the phone on its side so he could watch it full-screen.

Yeah this was bad. The video was a bit grainy, but it was clear as day that there were two men having sex on a bed.

Rationally, he understood that he was one of the people in the video, but for some reason it wasn't computing to him when he was watching it that his body was actually *his*. He felt like he was watching someone else.

"That's us?" Shane asked the question even though he already knew. You could see the mole on Ilya's right hip and Shane recognized the bruise on his left leg from where he fell during practice a few weeks ago. There was no mistaking it.

Ahhh fuck

Shane's thighs clenched together when he heard Ilya's voice in the video.

Then the video stopped and the replay button appeared. Shane pressed it and watched it again, looking for any identifying features that he needed to be concerned about.

The clip had nearly eighty thousand views. It had only been posted since last night and it already had eighty thousand views.

Shane didn't know exactly what that meant. Did that mean that eighty thousand people had seen the post, or that the post itself had been viewed eighty thousand times? Either way the thought of anyone else watching a moment he thought was private made Shane want to crawl into a dark hole and never come out.

"At least we look good," Shane said dryly.

When he looked up, Ilya gave him a sad smile.

"I'm so sorry Shane," Ilya apologized.

"It is what it is," Shane decided, turning the phone off and setting it down next to him. "We can't change it now, so we just have to deal with it."

Ilya seemed more than a little surprised that Shane was taking this in stride.

"If you want to go to the police, I support you," Ilya assured him. "Whatever you want, my love."

"You know I can't do that," Shane said like it was a fact because it may as well have been.

"Why not?"

Shane had an entire laundry-list of reasons why reporting this would only make it worse.

"What about you," Shane deflected. "You're in the video too. You should get a say in what happens."

Ilya's response was completely unhelpful.

"I just want you to do what feels right for you."

Why was he being so unbelievably stubborn? It wasn't only Shane's decision.

"The fewer people who know that video of us exists, the better. You're already being investigated by the administration, and if anyone knew that there was evidence of us being together..."

“I don’t care about that,” Ilya said. “If you feel like you need to file a report, then you should.”

“And then what,” Shane asked, his tone slightly edgy. “I out myself to the world? No team ever drafts me?”

“You can be anonymous.”

“And then I have to sit in a courtroom and look at his stupid face while a bunch of lawyers ask me questions? I don’t ever want to see him again. And even if I do come forward, how do I know for sure that he’ll go to prison? And even if he was one of the few guys that did actually go to jail, he’s going to get out eventually. His life will go on, but mine will be ruined. My whole future will be over.”

Ilya obviously didn’t understand what this would mean for Shane’s life. Shane’s privacy had already been invaded enough. He wasn’t going to let himself be dragged through the mud by the legal system just to prove a point.

“I won’t let him take my future from me,” Shane said defiantly. “I won’t, Ilya.”

Ilya appeared to finally be understanding what Shane was saying. But now he was looking at him like a victim, and Shane hated that.

“Don’t you dare,” Shane commanded. “Wipe that look off your face or I swear to god I’ll leave.”

Ilya adjusted his expression into something more acceptable to Shane.

“I’m sorry sweetheart,” Ilya said. “I just want what’s best for you.”

“What’s best for me is keeping our secret safe. Keeping *you* safe.”

The truth is that Shane had no idea what the right thing was in this situation. The ultimate best-case scenario would be seeing Ben behind bars. Preferably forever, but he would settle for any amount of time. A couple months even. Some form of public humiliation where everyone could see exactly who he was and the damage he caused. Something that would finally wipe that smug fucking smile off his face.

But Shane knew that his revenge fantasy was just that, a fantasy. It was too good to be true. And if it meant that Shane had to sacrifice any more of his own privacy, or put either his own or Ilya's career in jeopardy, then it simply wasn't worth it.

After all, he had that video that he took of Ben's confession. Hopefully that would be enough to keep him in line. And there was something empowering about having that video in his back pocket to use whenever he wanted. If Ben went to prison, that would be a finite punishment. He would eventually be released back into society and then he could continue hurting people. This way, Shane owned him.

Maybe just living with the knowledge that the blackmail video existed would make Ben think twice before pulling some shit like this again.

"It's fine," Shane said as if he were trying to convince them both. "No one knows that it's us in the video, right? As long as it stays that way, everything is going to be fine."

Ilya pushed Shane's hair out of his face.

"I hate seeing you like this," he said softly.

Shane hadn't cried all day. There wasn't any time in between everything that happened for him to have a breakdown. But hearing those words from Ilya's lips made him want to turn into a puddle of tears.

"Are you mad," Shane asked tearfully.

Ilya knelt down in between Shane's legs and took his hands.

"Extremely," Ilya said, running his thumbs over Shane's smooth skin. "But never at you. Do you understand me? You did nothing wrong."

Why did Ilya telling him that he did nothing wrong somehow make him feel worse?

"How many times are you going to keep telling me that when I fuck up?"

"Until you start believing it."

They breathed together for a moment while Shane was on the verge of tears.

"I wish you would just hate me," Shane said.

"Why," Ilya asked softly.

"Because I deserve it."

Ilya kissed each of the knuckles of Shane's right hand.

"I would never let anything happen to you."

Ilya tilted his head up and the look of danger in his eyes made Shane hold his breath.

“I would die for you,” Ilya told him, sounding completely serious.

Shane could have sworn his heart stopped. He had never felt so deeply cared for and yet also terrified.

Why would Ilya be willing to die for a man that he was going to break up with in a month? These types of declarations weren't helping Shane try to get used to the idea of having a life without him.

He needed to stop thinking.

Shane spoke in a whisper. “Can we go to bed now please?”

Ilya stared into his tear-drenched eyes.

“Yes love,” Ilya agreed. “You need sleep.”

Ilya took Shane's hand and led him into the bedroom. He guided him onto the bed and Shane sat down, acting nearly despondent. He undressed Shane slowly, pulling his t-shirt over his head, and then removing his belt and pants, and finally his socks. He was agonizingly gentle with him the entire time.

Once Shane was in only his boxers, Ilya asked, “Do you want a shirt?”

“One of yours?”

Ilya nodded.

“Yes,” Shane answered. Shane liked wearing Ilya’s clothes. He liked how they smelled like him and the way that they were slightly too big.

Ilya went to the dresser and opened the second drawer. He found a black t-shirt for Shane to wear.

“Lift your arms,” Ilya instructed, and Shane obliged. He yanked the billowy fabric over Shane’s upper-body, pulling his arms through the sleeves. “This is yours now,” Ilya said.

Shane’s lips turned upwards into a small smile.

They didn’t have sex that night for obvious reasons. It just wouldn’t have felt right. When Shane sort-of-offered in the form of a firm hand on Ilya’s thigh, Ilya gently told Shane that they both needed to rest.

It was a relief in the moment. But that didn’t mean that Shane was planning on being celibate forever. He loved Ilya. And more than that, he loved their sex life. No one could take that away from him. He wouldn’t let them.

“I’m sorry,” Ilya said just as Shane was beginning to drift off.

”Why are you sorry?”

”I told you I would protect you,” Ilya said remorsefully. “And I failed.”

”How were you supposed to know there was a camera,” Shane asked logically. “Let’s not do this. Blame ourselves. We don’t need to apologize to each other for things that aren’t our fault. We both made decisions that day.”

”I shouldn’t have gone to see you.”

"You can't think like that," Shane shut down his self-blame. "If you didn't come find me, then we wouldn't still be together."

Shane's heart was so full at that moment. He didn't know why, but he felt even closer to Ilya now.

"I don't regret anything," Shane promised him. "Not a single thing. We didn't do anything wrong. So let's not let anyone make us feel like we did."

Ilya gathered Shane in his arms and kissed the top of his head.

"I wish I could sleep with you every night," Shane told him.

As soon as he said it, Ilya got sad again.

"I know," Ilya said. "Me too."

"Four more weeks until summer," Shane cruelly reminded him.

This whole disaster had strangely put a lot of things in perspective. Shane's heart was pulling him in two different directions. Torn between his future playing the sport that he loved, and a future with the man he loved.

He had to choose one or lose them both.

Ilya was solemn. "Don't remind me."

“Are you gonna miss me?”

Shane knew that he was torturing Ilya by saying that. Maybe that was the point.

”Of course I will miss you.”

Good, Shane thought to himself.

Because he had been through a lot in the past six hours, and if there was one thing that he was absolutely certain of, it was that he wasn't going to let Ilya go without a fight.

Chapter End Notes

can you tell i love protective ilya? second only to jealous ilya in my book

Chapter 27: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

next chapter in the shane hollander revenge arc! let me know in the comments if you're still enjoying the story (sometimes i get self-conscious lol)

this chapter is about dallas, i'll get back to ben later (i have plans for what i'm going to do to him too *mischievous laughter*)

enjoy :)

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

Shane woke up wrapped in Ilya's strong arms, leaving a trail of drool on his chest. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

He used his pointer finger to draw uneven lines on Ilya's stomach.

"I love you so much," he whispered. "I've never felt this way about anyone before."

Shane watched Ilya's foot move under the blanket.

He looked up to see that Ilya's eyes were open slightly.

"Mmm. Good morning," Ilya said groggily.

"Morning," Shane said back.

Ilya smirked. "By the way," he said. "I love you too."

Shane rolled his eyes.

“I thought you were asleep,” Shane said, suddenly embarrassed.

“I can pretend to be asleep again if you want to keep talking.”

“Fuck you,” Shane said, hiding a smile.

Ilya grabbed Shane’s hands and pushed him over onto his back while Shane scrambled to get away.

“Is that what you want?”

“Maybe,” Shane said.

“Maybe?”

“Yes.”

Ilya released Shane’s hands and Shane brought Ilya down into a kiss.

Normally Ilya would pull his hair or run his hands over Shane's ass. But he didn't this time. Ilya touched him like he was fragile. Like he was worried that Shane would somehow fall apart in his hands if he moved too fast.

Right now Shane needed more.

“Touch me,” Shane demanded. “Touch me, I won’t break.”

He brought Ilya’s hand to the left side of his chest. His heart was racing.

Ilya still seemed unsure.

“If you want to stop, you will tell me?”

Shane’s watched Ilya’s chest rise and fall with his heavy breaths.

“Yes.”

He ran a hand over Ilya’s right arm.

“Please,” Shane begged softly. “Touch me. Show me I’m yours. I won’t break.”

Then Ilya’s expression shifted from concern into something dark.

“I know you won’t.”

Ilya placed his hands underneath Shane’s back and quickly flipped him over onto his stomach.

“You’re so good for me. Such a good little slut.”

Fuck yes. This is exactly what he needed.

“Yes,” Shane panted.

“Do you like that? Being my cocksleeve?”

“Please,” Shane moaned. “Need it so bad.”

Shane saw Ilya's arm reaching for the side table. Shane pulled down his boxers to make himself useful while Ilya lubed himself up behind him.

"You need my cock?"

"Yes."

Ilya tapped his cock against Shane's ass.

“How bad do you need it?”

“So fucking ba—“

Ilya pushed himself inside. Just the tip. And then swiftly pulled out.

Then he did it again.

Shane screamed and clawed at the sheets.

“Beg me for it.”

“Fuck me,” Shane cried. “Please fuck me.”

Ilya pressed himself back inside fully this time.

“You were made for me weren’t you,” Ilya said. “Made to take my dick. Made to take my come.”

“I was,” Shane answered honestly. “Want you to live inside me.”

Who was Shane Hollander? It didn’t matter. He was whatever Ilya decided he was. Whatever he wanted him to be.

Ilya kept a firm grasp on Shane’s hips as he filled him. Shane’s body went limp as Ilya kept using him, moving him up and down his cock.

Shane bit down on the pillow to keep quiet.

He must have had a life outside of this room, but it wouldn’t matter to him if he didn’t. If he only existed in this bed, if he only appeared in the moments that Ilya needed him and ceased to exist after he came, that would be more than enough.

Shane was utterly gone.

For weeks Shane had worried that all he was to Ilya was easy sex. That Ilya was only attracted to him because of the power that he held over him. But now that he knew that wasn’t the case, now that he knew how much Ilya truly cared about him, Shane realized how

much he wanted to be used. In that moment all he wanted was to be one of Ilya's playthings. An object. One that he cherished, but an object nonetheless.

Shane was beginning to realize that he held power over Ilya too. And he couldn't deny that thinking about that was exciting. Maybe he had even more influence over Ilya than Ilya had over him. Shane held Ilya's life in his hands. His job. His marriage. He could destroy him in the blink of an eye. He could ruin him. But he wouldn't. And Ilya knew that Shane would keep their secret in the same way that Shane knew that Ilya would never do anything to hurt him.

Ilya would die for him. That's what he said last night, and Shane believed it.

If Shane told him to stop what he was doing right now, Ilya would stop without question. If Shane decided he never wanted to have sex again, Ilya wouldn't make him.

If he told Ilya to cut himself open and bleed for him, he would probably do that too.

His orgasm didn't build, it erupted. Shane blacked out when he came.

When his soul returned to his body, Ilya was panting on top of him.

"Thank you," Shane said, making Ilya laugh.

"So polite," he teased. "You're welcome, Hollander."

Ilya kissed his sweaty forehead and held onto his face. Then he fell down on the bed, out of breath. Shane wondered if Ilya was always completely drained after sex or if it was something unique to *their* sex.

Then Shane looked over at Ilya and his eyes were drawn to his dick. He was still hard.

"Did you come too?"

Ilya's eyes flickered down his own body. "Of course," Ilya brushed him off.

Shane was too exhausted to push the issue.

"I'm going to get ready for class," Shane said, giving Ilya a parting kiss before sitting up. "I have a game tonight so I'll probably just sleep at home."

Ilya nodded. "Okay. Let me know when you get back to campus."

"It's only ten minutes away."

Ilya glared at him.

"Fine, I'll text you," Shane agreed. Then he had an idea. "Maybe we should share our locations with each other?"

"What do you mean?"

It was easy for Shane to forget about their age difference sometimes, but when it came to technology, Ilya was even more of a Luddite than he was.

"Give me your phone."

Ilya picked his phone off the side table, unlocked it and gave it to Shane. Shane navigated to their text thread, clicked on his name and pressed "Share my location."

"There," Shane said. "And I'll do the same. That way you'll always know where I am."

"Sounds kind of scary," Ilya joked.

"It kind of is," Shane agreed. "Love you."

"Love you more."

"Love you most."

"You're so competitive."

Shane smiled to himself and collected his clothes off the floor.

Shane and Rose were grabbing a coffee together before class and discussing their plans for the week. Well, technically Shane was having coffee and Rose was drinking some kind of matcha strawberry concoction that she ordered off the specialty menu.

"I don't know how you drink that," Shane noted as he climbed into the tall chair.

"Matcha is good for you, Mr. Athlete."

At that moment, both Shane and Rose's phones started lighting up on the table. Shane flipped his over and ignored the messages. It's impolite to look at your phone when you're with a friend.

Rose on the other hand didn't appear to have the same qualms about having proper table manners. She picked up her phone as the messages kept pouring in and then her jaw dropped.

"What is it?" Shane asked. "If you're going to ignore me during the one hour we've spent together this week, you can at least tell me what's going on."

Rose was too shocked to say anything.

"Lily texted me."

"Come on, you have to give me more than that."

"Shane," Rose said, like it was urgent. "You really need to see this."

Shit. He knew that stupid video was going to come back to haunt him.

"Rose, please don't watch it," Shane told her.

Rose was confused. "Why not? I want to see that bastard in handcuffs."

Shane's eyes narrowed. "Wait what?"

Rose's eyes were fixed on the screen.

"Here, look."

She handed him the phone.

It was a link to an article in the Montreal Sun.

Shane clicked on the link from Lily's message and it took him to the article. He only read the first line.

Twenty-year-old hockey star Dallas Kent turned himself in to police on Monday evening.

Now Shane's mouth was hanging open too.

"He's in jail?"

Rose took her phone back and kept reading while Shane sat there stunned.

"No," Rose said, scrolling downwards. "He's out on bail now."

"Is he on campus?"

Rose read the relevant portion of the article out loud to Shane verbatim.

"Three women, whose identities are protected by a publication ban, came forward to Montreal police last month."

"Three?"

She continued. *“Counsel for Mr. Kent gave a statement on Tuesday morning calling the allegations of sexual assault “preposterous” and said that his client looks forward to defending himself in court. In the meantime, Mr. Kent is expected to be back on the ice for a playoff game tonight against the University of Ottawa.”*

“They just decided to let him out,” Shane almost shouted. “How?”

“He wasn’t convicted of anything,” Rose said. “He was arrested.”

“Doesn’t that mean that the police are pressing charges? That means they must have a lot of evidence against him right?”

“I guess so.”

Shane was so relieved. He could tell from Rose’s face that she was too. He wasn’t in prison yet, but hopefully he would be eventually. At the very least, any time someone googled Dallas’s name they would be able to find this article. Shane didn’t know how much it would affect his chances of playing in the major leagues, and Dallas wasn’t that good of a player to begin with, but it definitely wouldn’t incentivize teams to sign him.

“We have a game tonight,” Shane said, unsure what he was supposed to do now.

Rose was astonished. “Can he still even play?”

Shane had no idea. He hoped that the answer was no. They’d have to kick him off the team now right? They couldn’t possibly let him keep playing after he’d been arrested. They had team policies against underage drinking for god’s sake. Surely being taken away in handcuffs for violating multiple women would mean that he would face some kind of consequence.

“Not if I have anything to say about it.”

Shane texted Hayden a couple hours before the game to see if he could swing by Shane's dorm so that they could show up together. He didn't feel like walking into that locker room alone. He needed back up.

As they approached the building, Shane heard yelling and chanting.

Oh my god.

There was at least fifty people gathered around the athletics building holding hand-written signs.

He read a few of the signs.

Justice for Survivors

No Means No

End Rape Culture

Protect Survivors Not Rapists

Survivors Deserve Justice

It was some kind of protest. They were protesting Dallas being allowed to play. How did they even organize something like this so quickly? He was arrested last night.

Then he saw familiar faces in the crowd. Rose and Lily were near the front, chanting along. Lily was carrying a sign that said: *I believe them.*

Rose's sign was a lot less subtle.

It simply read: "DALLAS KENT IS A RAPIST" in big capital letters.

She caught Shane's eye and waved. As he was heading through the doors, she mouthed the words "good luck". Shane mouthed "thank you" back.

He was sure as hell going to need it.

The team, minus Dallas, were all gathered around in the locker room.

"Don't listen to what's going on outside," Theriault told them. "Our focus tonight is on winning."

Shane's leg shook with rage.

"Coach," Shane said, standing up from the bench. "I can't play if he's playing."

Everyone in the room went quiet. Shane held his breath.

"Fuck off Shane," Theriault said after a couple seconds. "Don't pull that shit right now. You're playing."

But Shane was adamant. "I can't do it," Shane repeated himself. "I'm sorry." He turned to his fellow players. There were approximately twenty-two of them. "I'm sorry everyone. I just can't play if he's allowed to. I hope you can understand."

As he said that last part, Shane looked directly at Troy, who instantly demurred when he saw the realized why Shane was staring.

Hayden stood up and walked over from his stall so that he was standing next to Shane. He put his hand around his shoulder.

“I stand by my Captain,” Hayden said in solidarity.

“Thank you,” Shane whispered.

“Anytime,” Hayden said.

Coach Theriault surveyed the room. “Anyone else want to sit on the bench tonight? Speak now. I’m more than happy to make that happen.”

Shane noticed that a few of the guys seemed like they wanted to say something, but no one did.

“This is why people hate hockey players,” Shane said angrily. “Because of shit like this. I want people to feel safe at our games. How are they supposed to feel safe with him here? What kind of example are we setting?”

He looked at Troy again.

“We’re supposed to be role models.”

No one said a word. No one moved.

“I refuse to play for a team with a bunch of fucking cowards. I don’t want the fucking C. Take it. I don’t want it anymore.”

Then J.J. stood up, signalling his intention to speak, and everyone’s heads turned.

“Who would we rather have play tonight,” he asked. “Our Captain, who let’s face it, is the only reason we even made the playoffs this year, or Dallas, who scored a total of five goals all season.”

Shane was grateful that J.J. was sticking up for him, but the sentiment of what he was saying didn’t sit well.

“It’s not about that,” Shane said. “Thank you J.J. But it’s not about winning. It’s about basic human decency. You saw all the people outside. They expect something to be done about this, and they should! It’s a crime.”

“He hasn’t been convicted of anything,” one of the guys finally piped up. “They’re just allegations.”

Just allegations. What did that even mean, *just* allegations? Those allegations were made by real women who accused Dallas of rape.

Shane was outnumbered, but he wasn’t backing down.

“If you all want to pretend like you didn’t hear any of the rumours about Dallas, then fine,” Shane told them. “I can’t force you not to play. But I’m not playing.”

“Everyone stop it,” Theriault said, throwing his clipboard on the floor. “Anyone who is not suited up and on the ice doing warm-ups in the next five minutes is benched. At least for tonight, possibly for the rest of the season.” He turned to Shane. “We’ll talk about this later.”

Shane tilted his chin up.

“There’s nothing to talk about,” Shane said defiantly. “I won’t play as long as Dallas is playing.”

“Shane,” Theriault shouted a warning. “Stop being a pussy!”

Shane had been called worse.

“Why am I a pussy for actually taking a stand for once?” It was a good point. “It’s fucking pathetic that none of you even seem to care that there’s a rapist on our team.”

“Allegedly,” one player interjected.

“Fine, allegedly,” Shane conceded.

“Let the police do their investigation,” Theriault instructed. “The legal system will handle it.”

Oh please, Shane thought to himself. Since when have the police ever cared about victims of sexual assault?

“If you want to have another *meltdown*,” Theriault said mockingly. “Go ahead. But don’t try and drag your teammates down with you.”

Shane snarled.

“Fine,” he said. “I hope you can all live with yourselves.”

This conversation appeared to be over, but everyone refused to be the first person to leave the locker room. Maybe Shane's speech had swayed his teammates more than he thought.

"Um," Troy said weakly. "I'm not going to play either."

Theriault looked like he was going to pass out.

"Jesus Christ, Barrett," he sighed. "Okay. Anyone else?"

When no one dared invite any more of his wrath, Theriault clapped his hands together and said, "Good. Clear out." He gestured to the door so that everyone got the hint.

Shane watched as the majority of the team piled out of the room, hearing the sound of their skates hitting the padded floor. Theriault waited behind to berate the ones who stayed put.

"I'm very disappointed in you, Hollander."

"Back at you," Shane spat.

"Barrett, I thought you were better than that."

Troy hung his head.

"Are you going to insult me too," Hayden asked, because he felt left out.

"Get the fuck out of here Pike," Theriault shouted. "All of you! Get out."

He turned around and left in a huff.

The three of them listened from the locker room as the loud *boos* carried from the rink, presumably from the people in the stands reacting when Dallas stepped on the ice.

“Shane,” Troy said quietly.

Shane scowled at him.

“What do you want,” Shane asked rudely. “Do you think what you just did makes up for anything?”

Troy remained composed, not letting Shane see any hint of emotion.

“It doesn’t change anything,” Shane told him. “I don’t care if you want to pretend like you’re a good guy now. You’re not a good guy, Troy. You and I both know that.”

“Shane, I didn’t know,” Troy said.

“Are you sure you didn’t know,” Shane asked. “Or did you just not want to believe it?”

Hayden physically put himself between Troy and Shane.

“Lay off him, man.”

“No,” Shane refused. “He’s complicit.”

“You don’t know that he knew anything,” Hayden pointed out.

“He knew enough,” Shane decided.

Shane hung up his jersey in his locker before he left. He didn't know if he could continue being captain after this latest outburst. None of his teammates seemed to trust him. And honestly, he didn't think that this team deserved him as their captain.

Shane was pretty sure that after this semester was over, he was too. He was done with college. He could do better.

He was going to the NHL.

They lost against Ottawa, badly. Shane had never had four points scored against his team in a single game before. At least he was spared the embarrassment of being on the ice when it happened.

In the back of Shane's mind, he knew that it wouldn't have happened if he had chosen to play, but that didn't matter. Their team deserved to lose. They were spineless.

Rose messaged him later that night with some words of encouragement.

Heard you didn't play 2night. Proud of you, xo

Lily says she's proud of you too

yay dallas got arrested! yay for shane taking a stand! yay rose. yay hayden. boo for everyone else!

and no sorry troy you are not getting off the hook that easily

see you soon bye :)

Chapter 28: Author's Note

There are officially 500 of you subscribed to this story!! And we're almost at 100k words!!

Consider commenting so that I know you guys are still enjoying it (I try to respond to all comments but I may occasionally miss some). Don't be afraid to just leave an emoji or something lol.

At this point in the story, I want to take a poll. I feel like I have some ideas for how to extend this story, do you want me to? Or should I try to wrap it up? I feel like I could turn this into a whole novel. We still have some more solid plot left, but I'm just wondering where everyone's heads are at. Since I really do value your opinions. I will cry when it's over tho.

Also let me know, is this story what you thought it would be when you originally clicked on it? I didn't intend for it to get as fucking dark as it's gotten (hence all the updated tags - which I may still update in the future idk and as always please let me know any I should add). If any of you have been here from the beginning I would be surprised but lmk!!

It's been cathartic for me to write this story as a survivor of domestic violence who was once in a toxic relationship, but if it's gotten to be too much for some people I totally understand that too! I've tried to make the characters feel like real people as much as possible, and real people are morally grey and complicated. Including Ilya, which I hope to explore more in these last (maybe?) chapters. Even though Ilya and Shane are soulmates imo in every universe (and I promised you guys a happy ending and I'm not going back on my promise by any means), I do think that Ilya should have to grapple with some kind of consequences for his actions too. None of the characters in this story are entirely good or bad in my eyes (except Dallas who is 100% evil and has no redeeming qualities). But I do believe that actions should have consequences, and those consequences will be coming to fruition by the end of this story! Thank you to the commenters who encouraged me to go harder at the "bad" guys, you were right!!

I have an exam on Friday so I will be studying for that, but I can usually write a chapter in a few hours so maybe I'll try to post on Friday night or Saturday :)

Love y'all thank you for all the nice comments and support (it really does help me write more) 💕💕

Chapter 29: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

hello to the 519 of you currently subscribed!! (if you're new here... why?? do you like this?? do you hate it?? let me know in the comments)

i told you i'd (maybe) be back friday and here i am! i went out to dinner and now i'm ready to vent through writing!!

the majority of you said you want me to keep this story going, so be careful what you wish for i guess (i'm kidding... mostly). you guys also said you want shane and ilya to end up together, and i keep my promises so you will have it ****eventually**** but by no means is it going to be easy. and i'm now a bit worried that you guys may not like the ending i have in mind. but we're at least a few chapters away from that happening. also feel free to give me your thoughts in the comments, because i'm curious to know how you guys think its going to end!!

THIS CHAPTER IS ENTIRELY A DREAM/NIGHTMARE SEQUENCE!!

today we're diving into ilya's subconscious (scary i know)! i don't know if you guys want a window into my creative process, but I originally wrote the beginning of this chapter right after the first Ilya pov chapter, unsure if I would ever actually use it. but i'm reading a fic currently that just used a dream sequence so i felt inspired to do one too! i also think it's important for Ilya's character development and it will make him question a lot of things.

p.s. we're at 100k words can you even believe it?!!

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

Ilya always dressed professionally, but today he was wearing a full suit jacket and a \$200.00 tie that Svetlana picked out for him. She laid out his outfit on their bed this morning before they left.

She sat in the gallery behind him, watching the proceedings like the good friend she has always been to him, even though the spectacle of a disciplinary hearing must be a humiliating experience for her. This is her workplace too, Ilya reminds himself. And even though it's his career that's on the line, everyone is going to be fixated on her, waiting to see how she'll react to her husband's public flogging.

She drove them to the university because Ilya was too anxious to be capable of properly gripping the steering wheel. They didn't say a word to each other on the way there.

He'd hoped that his hands would stop shaking after having a cup of coffee, but he had no such luck. He kept them firmly on his lap under the table. He couldn't show fear. He couldn't show any weakness today.

Ilya did not want to "look guilty", even though everything that he was being accused of was undeniably true. He needed to demonstrate to the panel that he was remorseful while also acting like he had nothing to apologize for. He had to strike a balance between being respectful of the process, while also maintaining his innocence.

That was going to be an exceptionally difficult task when he had to face the student who made the complaint. The coward who hid behind anonymity in an attempt to ruin him.

Ilya didn't care as much about the attack on his character as he did the fact that Shane had now been dragged into this mess.

Poor Shane. Perfect Shane. The boy who never did anything wrong in his life. What did he do to deserve any of this? Ilya ruined him, exactly like he always knew that he would. He took it too far. He let him get too attached. And now look where they were.

Ilya had grown too fond of him.

That's when he notices her. Becca is sitting on the opposite side of the gallery wearing a tan patterned suit jacket and matching skirt. She looked different since he last saw her. She dyed her hair red and she's wearing copious amounts of eye makeup, but she still has the same bone structure and the silver stud poking through the right side of her nostril. He doesn't find her as sexy as he used to, but even Ilya can't deny that she's still beautiful.

She appears like she's waiting to be called on.

That's when Ilya realizes something: She did this. This is all because of her. The complaint, the hearing, all of it. Ilya's anger nearly boiled over at the realization.

But wait, that didn't make any sense. The complaint mentioned Shane. How did Becca know about him and Shane? She wasn't even a student here anymore. Ilya hadn't had anything to do with her for years now.

Was she stalking him? Now that was a real possibility. But she didn't live in Montreal. There were too many gaps in that explanation. Becca was obsessive, maybe a little bit unstable, but she wasn't a total psychopath.

Then a man enters the room. He walks past Ilya and sits next to the Dean.

"The next witness for the university is Becca Jacobs."

Ilya's head turns to watch Becca rise from her chair and walk forward. She sits down at the end of the long table, far away from him, but also in his direct eye line.

"Good morning Ms. Jacobs."

"Good morning," she says into the microphone. When did she get a microphone? Maybe it was always there and he just didn't notice.

"How are you doing today?"

"I've been better."

Her quip lightens the mood. Even Ilya nearly smiles. She was always so sweet, wasn't she?

"I have a few questions for you this morning if that's all right."

"Sure."

"Can you tell us about how you first became introduced to Professor Rozanov?"

"I met Professor Rozanov when I was a freshman student in the history department," Becca said in response to the question.

"How would you describe the nature of your relationship with Professor Rozanov?"

Here we go.

"He was my Russian history professor," Becca answered. "And we were lovers."

"You were dating your history professor," the man confirmed.

"Yes," Becca agreed. "If you can call it dating, then sure."

"What year was this?"

"It was my freshman year, so... 2014," she answers. "I'm pretty sure. I graduated high school in 2013, so that should be right."

Why did she have to use the words "high" and "school" in the same sentence. Jesus Christ, Ilya wished someone would just put him out of his misery already. Fire him, but don't make him listen to this woman sit there and mischaracterize him.

Anything would be better than sitting here and being subjected to this nonsense.

"And how long did your relationship with Professor Rozanov last?"

"About a month," Becca answered.

"When did your relationship with Professor Rozanov turn sexual," the man in the cheap grey suit asked.

Ilya craned his head to look back at Svetlana. She wouldn't meet his gaze. He turned back around.

"A few weeks into Fall semester," she replied. "I was going to see him in his office. He had lent me a book — I can't remember the name of it now. I think it was The Brothers Karamazov. But I could be wrong. It was so long ago. It was for a paper I was writing for his class." She was talking quickly and paused to catch her breath. "Anyway, I thanked him for letting me borrow it and then—" she shook her head.

"Please continue, Ms. Jacobs. You said you were in Professor Rozanov's office returning a book."

"Yes," Becca said, shifting uncomfortably in her seat. "I thanked him and then— then I noticed the way he was looking at me."

"How was he looking at you?"

"He was looking at me like he wanted to kiss me," she said. "Or at least, that's what I thought the look meant. But he didn't kiss me. He just kept staring at me like he was daring me to kiss him. And so I leaned up and kissed him on the lips."

The man asking the questions paused, letting the answer settle over the room.

Then he continued. “How did Professor Rozanov respond to you kissing him? Did he pull away? Tell you to stop?”

“No, no he didn’t,” Becca said. “He kissed me back, and put his hands on my waist and pulled me towards him.”

Ilya had to concentrate to stop himself from rolling his eyes. This was a lot for 9:00 on a Monday morning. Were they going to make her walk through every single intimate encounter they’d ever had? That was going to take a while.

“Did you have sexual intercourse in Professor Rozanov’s office?”

Well that answered Ilya’s question. Yes, they were going to discuss everything.

“Yes,” Becca answered quickly, before she even took a second to think about it.

The man was already moving on to his next question when Becca suddenly retracted her answer. “Actually—wait no. We didn’t do it that time. He just... um... yeah. Like basically just—” she was stuttering. “I’m trying to think of the right word. I’m not sure that it’s appropriate.”

The word was cunnilingus. Even Ilya knew the word that she was looking for and English wasn’t his first language.

“Oral sex,” she said after a moment.

“You performed oral sex on Professor Rozanov?”

“No,” she denied, giving a look of disgust. “He gave me oral sex. And then I left.”

“You didn’t reciprocate oral sex on Professor Rozanov?”

Jesus Christ. How many times were they going to say his name? And had no one ever heard of the word blowjob?

“Not at that time, no. Eventually yes.”

Wasn’t Ilya supposed to be the one on trial here? His actions were the reasons that this entire panel had been convened, and yet it was poor Becca who had to sit there and take this abuse. Ilya saw the way she was squirming, trying to escape her chair. She looked so embarrassed. He almost felt bad for her. He’s supposed to be the evil one - the sick perverted professor who took advantage of all these fully-grown adults - and yet they were the ones humiliating her by making her answer these questions.

“When was the first time you had sexual intercourse with Professor Rozanov?”

Becca shuffled. “A few days later at his apartment.”

“At his apartment that he shared with his wife?”

They really needed to remind everyone that he had a wife. Just because they couldn’t technically put him on trial for adultery didn’t mean they weren’t still going to try.

Shouldn’t they ask Svetlana how many people she’d had sex with since they’d been married? If Ilya was going to be punished for breaking some school policy, fine, so be it, but he was a good husband.

“No,” Becca said. “His wife never lived there.”

God this must have looked so bad. They didn’t realize that he hadn’t done anything wrong.

“How many times did you have sexual intercourse at Professor Rozanov’s apartment?”

“You mean that night,” Becca clarified.

“Sure,” the man said. “Let’s start there.”

Becca nodded. “Twice that night, if I remember correctly. And then the next morning, I had just gotten my period so we... we just used our hands.”

Now everyone in the room looked uncomfortable. If Ilya had a mirror, he would probably look uncomfortable too.

“How many times would you say you went to Professor Rozanov’s apartment?”

“I don’t really remember,” Becca said. That didn’t bode well for her credibility. “Maybe eight or nine.”

“Is his apartment the only place you engaged in sexual activity?”

“Well, his office too,” Becca said.

“Right,” the man said. “You mentioned that already. Was there anywhere else?”

“His car,” Becca answered. “Sometimes.”

“You had sex in his car?”

The man reacted as if car sex were illegal.

“Sometimes,” she said simply.

“Where were you parked when you were having sex in his car?”

Why did he assume the car was parked?

Becca shrugged and sighed. “Random places, parking lots.”

“Did you ever have sex in the school parking lot?”

“Once or twice.”

The man nodded. “I want to switch gears here if you’ll allow me.”

Finally. All the sex questions were over. He really dragged those out.

“Did Professor Rozanov ever promise you anything in exchange for having sex?”

What the fuck? What kind of monster did they think he was?

“What do you mean,” Becca asked, confused.

Just tell him the truth, Ilya thought. He never promised her anything. She came on to him. She wanted this. She chose it.

“He never promised you a better grade or some sort of special privileges if you had sex with him?”

”Oh,” Becca said. “No, nothing like that.”

At least she was being honest about one thing.

“Do you feel like Professor Rozanov took advantage of you?”

Becca shrugged. “He’s an adult.”

She was an adult too.

”But so were you,” the man aptly pointed out.

”I was eighteen,” she continued. “I had never been away from home before. I missed my family. I had no friends.”

She paused dramatically, as if her response meant something important.

”Yes,” Becca finally answered. “He took advantage of me.”

”I just have one last question,” the man said. “Did you love Professor Rozanov?”

What the hell kind of question was that?

Becca scowled. Her lips closed tightly.

“No, I didn’t,” she said sharply.

”And what are your feelings towards Professor Rozanov today?”

She looked across the room at Ilya, staring into his eyes for the first time all morning.

”I despise him,” she said, never breaking eye contact. “He disgusts me.”

Everyone in this room hates him, including Ilya himself.

”Thank you Ms. Jacobs,” the nameless man said. “You’re a very brave woman.”

That’s when Ilya woke up laying in bed next to his wife. He shut his eyes and tried to fall back asleep before the memory of his awful dream fully imprinted on his brain.

Chapter End Notes

did you enjoy this? was this chapter boring? did i write ilya too creepy? lmk!!

see you soon :)

Chapter 30: Svetlana

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

did someone ask for a svetlana chapter??! you guys give me suggestions and i deliver!

i didn't realize last chapter was going to be so confusing. you guys, i'm sorry!!! it really was just a bad dream. i didn't mean to scare anyone!

but seriously i love all your comments so keep them coming!!

it was fun writing morally-grey svetlana. this chapter is depressing but hopefully you like it!!

****WARNING** for potentially dubious consent in this chapter. reminder to please read the tags!!**

also if you don't want to read about ilya and svetlana having sex, just skip this chapter. you'll miss some plot, but it's not that complicated.

okay now enjoy :)

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

Svetlana woke up next to her husband for the first time in two days. It was a simple act that she had once taken for granted, but not anymore. He must have come home while she was already sleeping and gotten into bed being careful not to alert her to his presence.

They still hadn't spent a *real* night together in a while. Probably close to five weeks now. Not that she was begging for it or anything. She had plenty of suitors of her own.

It's not that Svetlana needed a man. She didn't *need* anyone. She just missed her husband. More than anything, she missed her best friend. Even though they were married, their friendship always came first. It was the foundation of their entire relationship, and she didn't appreciate him shutting her out like this.

She looked over at his peaceful sleeping face resentfully and then angrily shoved him awake.

He stirred, blinked a few times, then looked up at her.

“Hi,” he said simply.

“You came home,” she noted.

“Don’t I always?”

“No,” she said.

These days she hardly ever knew when he was going to be sleeping at home. She fondly remembered the nights early on in their marriage that Ilya used to stumble into their room past midnight, half drunk, with another woman’s lipstick on his neck. She remembered how he would crawl into bed and spoon her awake. Then she would let him do to her whatever he wanted to do to the woman at the bar, and then she would fall back asleep again.

That exact sequence of events hadn’t happened in years. Not since they started seeing other people. No one told Svetlana that when she agreed to an open marriage, she was voluntarily giving that up. The truth was that not needing your spouse for sex fundamentally changes the nature of your connection to each other. When you could get sex anywhere, you stop putting as much work into your relationship. You stop caring about working through your issues. You just fight about the same things over and over on repeat without ever actually solving anything.

Maybe that was a generalization. Svetlana really was happy *most* of the time. And she wouldn’t want to go back to how it was before. The lying, the betrayal. Their relationship now was infinitely better than it was.

“Were you ever going to tell me what happened with Shane?”

Ilya had left immediately after their conversation to go and break the news to Shane about the video. While he was gone, the account had been deleted, finally, and the police were still investigating who was behind it.

“Oh that,” Ilya said.

Was he being an asshole intentionally to piss her off this early in the morning? Because that was a terrible decision that would only end badly for him.

“Yeah that,” Svetlana gruffly confirmed. “Does he know who could have made that video?”

Ilya looked like he didn’t want to divulge whatever Shane had told him. But she was his wife, he could tell her anything. That was the whole deal about marriage.

“Tell me,” Svetlana said.

Ilya still didn’t want to say it.

“If my husband’s in the sex tape, I think I have a right to know who filmed it.”

He finally caved. “It was some guy that Shane was seeing for a few weeks.”

That’s horrible, Svetlana thought. She knew that it was strange to feel sympathy for the person that was screwing her husband, but Shane seemed like a genuinely good person. He didn’t deserve this. And neither did Ilya. No one could possibly deserve something like this happening to them.

Svetlana’s next question did not reflect the compassion she was feeling on the inside.

“Does he have any proof?”

Ilya scoffed. “I don’t know,” he said.

“Did you not ask him?”

Ilya looked at her out of the corner of his eyes.

“He didn’t really feel like talking about it,” Ilya said. “Would you want to talk about something like that?”

She understood that Ilya wanted to respect Shane’s feelings, but Svetlana couldn’t just back off that easily.

“Does Shane think that this guy could have made the complaint?”

“I didn’t ask,” Ilya confirmed.

Jesus, what did he ask?

“Ilya,” she said, irritated.

“I’m sorry, I was busy trying to comfort him.”

She rolled her eyes. Svetlana knew exactly what he meant by that statement. And what about her? She was freaking out too and he hadn’t even bothered to let her know that everything was okay.

“What’s this person’s name,” Svetlana prodded.

“I don’t know.”

“Oh my god, Ilya.”

“I’ll ask him,” Ilya promised.

“No, you’ve done enough,” Svetlana decided. “I’ll figure it out.”

When Svetlana was alone last night after Ilya left, she had hatched a plan of her own to find the person who made the complaint. It involved some questionable ethics and a bit of manipulation, but nothing she wasn’t willing to do to help her husband.

She was honestly looking forward to it.

“How are you going to figure out who Shane slept with?”

She actually had a pretty good idea how she was going to do this. Ilya wasn’t the only one in their marriage who had a way of getting what he wanted from people. Svetlana could charm anyone she set her mind to. And lately one of the targets of her charms was a newer professor who happened to sit on the university senate’s disciplinary committee. Jason was rugged and kind of boorish. He was also married with three kids, but he certainly didn’t act like it when he was around her. His wife was about seven years shy of being age appropriate, and seemed none the wiser.

Normally, Svetlana wouldn’t pursue someone who had a wife and children. But if it was going to help Ilya, then she would do it. She already wanted to anyway, and now she had the perfect excuse.

“I might know somebody,” Svetlana said coyly.

Ilya raised a skeptical eyebrow.

“Who?”

“Don’t worry about it,” she teased. Usually talking about her boyfriends or girlfriends created some perverted sense of excitement for Ilya, but today he just seemed kind of annoyed.

“How are you so sure they will even know who reported me? The complaint was anonymous,” Ilya reminded her.

“Just because the person who reported it wanted to remain anonymous doesn’t mean that no one knows who they are,” Svetlana explained the procedure to him. “Whoever this guy is, they’ve definitely interviewed him already.”

She could tell Ilya was coming on board with the plan.

"Even *if* we figure out who it is," Ilya qualified his answer, "What are we going to do about it?"

“Make him take it back,” Svetlana said like it was obvious.

“Can he even do that?”

“We’ll make him recant his statement.”

“How?”

“Threaten to go to the police about the video,” Svetlana said logically.

“And if that doesn’t work?”

Svetlana had already thought of a back-up plan.

“We tell the administration what he did to Shane and he gets punished.”

“We don’t have proof that he did anything.”

“We’ll bluff him,” Svetlana said. “I’m sure it won’t be hard. We have to be smarter than some freshman who thought it was a good idea to post a sex video of his ex-boyfriend on the internet.”

Ilya rubbed her leg. “Are you sure about this? I don’t want this to come back and hurt you later.”

Svetlana was a grown woman who could handle herself.

“I’ll handle it,” she said with certainty. “In the meantime, just don’t do anything to make it worse.”

Ilya chuckled. “Sure, Sveta. But I don’t want you to have sex with someone just to save my job.”

“It’s not like that. I’ve been wanting to for a while,” she admitted. “You’re just giving me the opportunity, and this way,” she hiked her left leg over Ilya’s waist to straddle him, “We can both get something out of it.”

Ilya smiled. "I only care that you do what makes you happy," he told her.

"Then let me do this for us," Svetlana said. "It will make me happy for you to still be employed," she said jokingly. "Plus I get to have sex. Win-win."

She leaned down and kissed his devilish grin away. He ran his hands under her lace camisole.

"Okay," he agreed to her plan. "If you think you can get it out of them."

"I can get anything I want out of anyone," Svetlana said confidently. "You should know that by now."

Her husband really did look good right now. She tugged on the back of Ilya's hair to pull him up to her.

"Lucky me," Ilya said sarcastically.

"Yes, lucky you," Svetlana said. "You have a beautiful wife who does nice things for you."

Ilya stared up at her admiringly and moved her hair behind her ears. "I know that."

"Good," she said. "Now, are you going to fuck me before we have to leave for work?"

Ilya glanced at the bathroom door.

"I should probably shower," he announced, gently guiding her back onto her side of the bed.

Svetlana felt dejected. He had been avoiding sex for weeks. At first she thought that maybe it was just a consequence of getting older. That he simply couldn't manage as many sexual relationships as he used to. But she was beginning to wonder if he was growing tired of her.

She rolled onto her stomach and watched him walk away.

"Do you want to talk about the fact that you haven't fucked me in over a month?"

She couldn't see his face, but she knew he was rolling his eyes.

Ilya turned around and sighed. "Not really."

"You're a dick."

"Can we talk about this later, I'm going to be late."

"I shouldn't have to beg you to touch me," Svetlana said, more frustrated than hurt.

"You don't have to beg," Ilya told her.

"It's not like you ever ask me for it anymore."

Ilya came back to bed, kissed Svetlana on the cheek and said, "Sweetheart, stop begging."

"Fuck you," Svetlana yelled, insulted as she pushed him away.

Ilya just laughed.

“You’re such an asshole, and I was being serious.”

“We’ve both been busy,” Ilya said. It was a pathetic excuse.

“Never stopped you before.”

Ilya wasn’t taking this conversation seriously. She was going to have to do something to make him take her seriously.

She pulled his arm and forced him down onto the mattress by his shoulders and held him down while she got on top. She’d had enough of this.

“What are you doing,” he asked, amused.

“We’re having sex.”

“Why do we have to do it right now?”

“It’s been five weeks,” she said. “That’s too long.”

“Come on, I’m going to be late,” Ilya objected.

“You can be a couple minutes late,” she told him.

His arms flopped out at his sides. It was like kissing a dead fish.

“Ugh,” Svetlana finally exclaimed. “Fine. If you don’t want me then fine. I won’t force you.”

Svetlana looked away.

He took her hand and she shook him off.

“You’re not forcing me,” he said.

“You’re not even hard right now.”

Ilya looked down between his legs.

“Yeah,” Svetlana reiterated.

“It’s not you,” Ilya assured her. “It’s just that I kind of already had sex this morning.”

Oh. That made more sense.

Svetlana accepted defeat. She fell down onto the other side of the bed and stared up at the ceiling, frustrated both physically and emotionally.

“Are we ever going to have sex again,” she asked.

Then Ilya crawled on top of her and kissed her again.

“Here,” he said, his hand already on the inside of her thigh. “This will be faster anyway.”

He made his way down her body, pulling her legs apart and placing his head between them. He kissed and bit the sensitive area on her right upper thigh.

Then he pulled her panties to the side and started licking in soft teasing strokes.

“You don’t have to do that,” Svetlana told him.

Ilya lifted his head, continuing to rub her clit with his thumb.

“I want to,” Ilya said.

“I thought you had to shower.”

“I’ll do it later. It’s more important to me that my wife is satisfied.”

And how could she say no to an offer like that?

She booked the hotel room and texted Jason the address before leaving the house that morning. They agreed to meet around one o’clock.

She had been looking forward to this for so long. Until that day, that hadn't done anything more than kiss. The entire rest of her morning, she was filled with the barely containable anticipation that she always felt before having sex with a new person. For her that was something that never went away, no matter how long the list got.

But sometimes fantasy is better than reality.

Svetlana had just spent the better part of ten minutes coaching Jason on how to give head properly. She was tired, raw and hadn't even gotten to finish.

It was too bad because he really was so handsome. A face like that was wasted on him. The more she thought about it, his attractiveness is probably why he's so stale in bed. He never had to learn because so many people would probably settle for that face even if it meant having to finish yourself off after he left.

"Did you come," he asked offhandedly.

Normally she would have told him the truth, but today getting off wasn't her only goal. She had more important things in mind.

She had to remind herself that this wasn't a total waste. Sex wasn't the only reason she was here.

"That was great," she told him and he looked instantly relieved. She hated giving men unearned confidence in their abilities, but it was for the greater good. Hopefully the next unlucky woman would correct her error.

Svetlana rolled over on her side and grabbed his arm to keep him in bed.

"Just stay for a minute," she requested.

He smiled and lay back down facing her.

"What are you doing for the rest of the day," she asked as a lead-in. She couldn't come out with her real intentions too early.

“I’ll probably go back to my office,” he said.

She nodded along, waiting for her turn to speak again.

“Hey,” Svetlana did her best to sound casual. “Are you still on the senate committee?”

“Yeah,” he said.

“That must be a lot of work.”

He scrunched his eyebrows.

“I guess, sure.”

“Do you have any big cases going on,” she asked, trying her best to sound naive.

“Um,” he stuttered.

She smiled in a way that made his eyes go white. He inhaled sharply.

“Wait a minute,” he said, catching her drift. “Is that why you asked me to meet you? Is this a set up?”

“You make it sound so bad,” Svetlana said playfully. “I’m actually offended. You think I would have sex with you if it didn’t mean something to me?”

Svetlana was having a bit of fun. She deserved it after how she spent the past fifteen minutes.

“You’re so full of shit.”

“So what you’re saying is that you don’t want to leave your wife for me,” she joked.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?”

A lot of things probably.

“I was wondering,” Svetlana began laying her trap. “This was nice and everything, but now I need a favour.”

"No," he said, shaking his head. "I can't be involved in whatever this is. Whatever you're planning."

Svetlana acted shocked that he would accuse her of being calculated.

"What I'm planning?"

"Yes," he confirmed. "I can't be a part of it. You know I can't talk to you what's going on with your husband," he said firmly. "We shouldn't even be having this conversation right now. I could get in so much trouble."

He should have thought about that before lying to his wife and meeting her in a hotel room. Svetlana wasn't above using blackmail to protect her family. And Ilya was her family.

“I wonder what your wife would think about you being here with me,” she said. Her statement sounded neutral, but they both knew from the context of their prior conversation that it was anything but. “I imagine you’d be in even more trouble if she somehow found out,” Svetlana said.

“Are you serious,” he asked.

Svetlana just kept going on her tangent. “She doesn’t seem like the type to stay with a husband who cheats on her when she’s at home with your children.” Svetlana tapped her fingers against her chin. “She’s pregnant again, right? I saw the announcement on instagram. Congratulations by the way. Four kids under four must be tough. Probably not great for your sex life, I imagine.”

He massaged his temple. “This can’t be happening.”

He clearly didn’t know her very well.

“Her name’s Christy, right? I met her at the holiday party last year. We had a great conversation. She’s very sweet. A lot younger than you.”

His eyes were bugging out of his head.

“Did Ilya send you here to have sex with me?”

Svetlana shrugged.

“You’re both crazy!”

That was a little over the top.

“I love my husband very much,” Svetlana told him.

“I can see that,” he said mockingly.

“But I make my own decisions.”

“So that’s what this was all about then,” he asked. “Helping him get out of whatever trouble he's gotten himself into?”

It was close enough.

“Pretty much,” she admitted. “I was thinking you could help me with something.”

“By blackmailing me?”

“Well I was hoping you would just do it to repay me for the amazing sex,” Svetlana said brashly. “But I’m happy to go the blackmail route too.”

“What is wrong with you?”

“Maybe you should ask yourself that,” Svetlana suggested. “Since you’re the one who just slept with a crazy person. What does that say about you?”

“I’m sorry, okay? I shouldn’t have called you crazy.”

Why was he apologizing now?

“Save the apologies for your wife,” Svetlana said. “If you really want to make it up to me, you can give me what I want.”

“I really can’t help you with this.”

Yes he could. And he would crack eventually. She just hadn’t put enough pressure on him yet.

“Do you think I’m not being serious,” Svetlana asked. “I will tell her about us. It makes no difference to me.”

“You would really break up a family,” he asked, trying to appeal to some sense of right and wrong. “That’s low even for you.”

Oh please. He must think she's a complete idiot. She had no empathy for a man who was cheating on his pregnant wife.

“You broke up your own family by doing this,” Svetlana said.

She tried to strike a deal.

"You love your family, right," she asked rhetorically. "I love my family too. And I won't let anything bad happen to them. So if you allow someone to hurt my family, then I'm going to hurt yours. It's as simple as that."

"You're insane," he said.

“He doesn’t deserve any of this,” Svetlana argued.

“He had sex with multiple students.”

“We all do things we aren’t proud of,” Svetlana pointed out. “Like you, right now. What makes what you’re doing any better? You knew it’s wrong but you did it anyway.”

“This is different,” he argued.

“I don’t care how you want to justify it to yourself,” Svetlana told him. “I’m not asking for much, just a name.”

“The name of what?”

“The person who made the complaint against my husband.”

“Oh, that’s all,” he said sarcastically. “You know I can’t do that.”

Svetlana sighed passive-aggressively. “Your wife is so beautiful,” Svetlana said. “And she’s still young. I’m sure it will be easy for her to meet someone else.”

He glared at her, but Svetlana did not retreat. She wasn’t bluffing.

“If that’s what you want,” Svetlana said finally. “I’m more than happy to tell her about what we just did. It would be the right thing to do. Let her move on, find someone who can treat her better.”

Someone who can actually give her an orgasm.

“Fine,” he agreed. “I’ll tell you. But no one can ever find out that it came from me.”

Svetlana eagerly agreed to his condition.

“Yes, okay, just tell me.”

In a second she was finally going to learn the identity of the person who was making her husband’s life very difficult, and she couldn’t wait to go home and tell him about her success. Maybe he’d even reward her for her efforts like he did this morning.

“He’s a graduate student in the history department,” he said. “His name is Michael Quinn.”

Michael. Michael Quinn.

She let it sit on the edge of her tongue just to see how it felt. The name vaguely rang a bell. She remembered that Ilya had a research assistant for a project a few years ago whose name was Mike or Mitchell or something in that vein. But when she scoured her brain for memories associated with that time, she couldn’t come up with anything.

“Thank you,” Svetlana said, patting him on the chest. “Now was that so hard?”

“Can you leave,” he snapped at her.

“Sure,” she agreed with a put-on smile.

She sat up and flung her legs off the bed. She picked up her dress off the floor and stepped into it. It had a zipper in the back.

She looked over at him for help. A gentleman would have offered without her needing to ask.

"Can you zip me?"

She thought her request may have been a step too far. But within a few seconds, he crossed to the other side of the bed and zipped her zipper.

"Thanks," she said. Before grabbing her purse off the side table and walking out the door to her car.

The blood drained from Ilya's face.

"Sveta, are you sure that's the name of the person who filed the complaint?"

Uh oh.

"I think so," Svetlana answered based on her memory.

"Are you positive?"

"Yeah," Sveta agreed. Why was he acting so strange?

Unless... oh shit.

"Why," Svetlana asked as the pit in her stomach grew. "Do you know him?"

Ilya cracked his knuckles.

“You could say that,” he said vaguely.

Svetlana knew exactly what that meant.

“Did you fuck him?”

In that moment Ilya couldn't possibly have looked more guilty if he tried.

“Are you kidding me,” Svetlana yelled. “What were you thinking?”

Ilya pointlessly defended himself. “I thought he was fine,” Ilya defended his actions. “He wasn't even my student. He seemed totally normal.”

“You really know how to pick them, don't you,” Svetlana said sarcastically. “Why is everyone you sleep with a total psychopath?”

“They're not all crazy,” Ilya argued.

“Katie nearly set the house on fire when you broke up,” Svetlana reminded him.

“That was an accident,” he protested. “She was experiencing some intense emotions.”

“She wanted to murder us both.”

”Whatever.”

“Ilya,” Svetlana said when she noticed something was missing from his left hand. “Where is your ring?”

Ilya glanced down at his hand before slinking it into his pocket.

“I took it off,” he said casually.

Why the hell would he take it off?

“Why would you do that?”

Svetlana had known Ilya’s face since they were children. The way his nose twitched when he got nervous was an obvious tell.

“Did he tell you to take it off?”

Ilya hesitated, which meant he was deciding whether or not to lie.

“He doesn’t like when I wear it around him.”

At least he was being honest. That was a good sign.

“Do you never take yours off,” Ilya asked.

Svetlana looked down at her simple three-stone ring and the gold band underneath it. For as long as she could remember, she had never taken it off. She wouldn’t even think to do something like that.

Their arrangement was about sex, not love. They had never agreed to let each other fall in love with other people. Any time Svetlana felt herself begin to fall for someone, she cut off the relationship right away. But clearly Ilya hadn't done the same. At least, not this time.

"No," Svetlana said. "That would be lying. And I don't feel the need to pretend to be something I'm not."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Exactly what I said," Svetlana told him. "You're lying to that poor boy. Making him think that there's any reality where you could be together. It's a lie. You're going to break his heart. And I actually really like Shane," Svetlana admitted. "He's a good person."

"And I'm not a good person?"

"You're my favourite person," Svetlana said. "But you and I both know that we're not like other people."

"Well maybe I want to change," Ilya said.

Svetlana scoffed. "You want to change for him?"

Ilya lifted his shoulders. "I don't know. Maybe."

He was so fucking selfish.

"I've known you for almost twenty years and he's the person that finally makes you want to be better," Svetlana pointed out the irony.

Ilya didn't have anything to say to that.

“You’re going to ruin him,” Svetlana said angrily. “Is that what you want? To ruin a good person?”

“Stop it,” Ilya said sternly.

The problem with being married to someone you grew up with is that you know all the right buttons to push. And tonight, Svetlana was going to keep pushing that particular button until it broke.

“He’s just a kid,” Svetlana said. “You can’t drag him into this any more than you already have.”

“He can make his own choices,” Ilya said.

“That’s bullshit,” Svetlana yelled. “You know exactly what you do to people, Ilya. The power you have over people. He would do anything you told him to do.”

“If you want me to end it with him, just say so. But stop pretending like you care about my happiness.”

Svetlana was disgusted by him right now. All she had ever done was try to make him happy. She protected him. She stood up for him in the rooms that he wasn’t in. His reputation was improved just by being married to her. She was his shield. She cloaked him in virtue. She was the only reason that his flaws had been overlooked for so long by everyone.

She should have just let him get thrown to the wolves.

“All I ever do is protect you,” she said in quiet desperation. “I’m the one who got the fucking name. You couldn’t even get him to tell you.”

“You didn’t have to do that,” Ilya said. “I didn’t ask you to.”

“You don’t have to ask me to do it, I’m your wife. Of course I’m going to do anything I can to help you.” She couldn’t believe this was happening. How could he question her devotion to him? “I am the only person looking out for you in this world,” she told him the brutal truth. “I am the only person who has ever looked out for you. And you are treating me horribly. I can deal with the humiliation, Ilya, I don’t care. I know that everyone thinks I’m crazy for staying married to you after everything.”

Ilya stood there despondently while she yelled at him.

“I know what it’s like to love you, and sometimes, it fucking hurts,” Svetlana said. “I don’t wish that on him. So fuck whoever else you want. Just leave him out of this.”

Ilya went to the closet and grabbed his light winter coat, since it was getting nicer these days, and went for the door.

“Where the hell are you going,” Svetlana asked. “Are you going to see him? After I just told you—”

“I’m not going to see him,” Ilya interrupted. He shook his head. “I just need... to think. For a while. I need some space.”

He had drained all the fight left in Svetlana. She had no choice but to let him go.

“Fine,” she said, resigned to his decision. “Take your space.”

Ilya opened the door and slammed it shut behind him.

As soon as he was gone, Svetlana’s knees buckled and she dropped to the floor.

Fuck him.

Who was this person she was arguing with? It certainly wasn't the man she married. It wasn't the boy she grew up with either.

And then the thought struck her. She had never seen him fight so hard for anything in his life.

Ilya was already in love with someone who wasn't her. He had broken one of their cardinal rules. And that meant that she didn't know if their marriage could survive.

Chapter End Notes

did you guys enjoy the svetlana pov? if yes, tell me in the comments. if not, don't tell me!

ben wasn't lying about not being the one to file the complaint. what do you think will happen next??

love you byeee :)

Chapter 31: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey!!

you guys seemed to like the svetlana chapter which made me so happy, so hopefully we can keep the good streak going with this chapter! i'm always mildly afraid you may not like what i write and this chapter was no exception.

we're still at the "shane revenge arc" part of the story. this is a bit of an interlude. i planned for this to happen in the same chapter as the ben stuff is resolved but I had to split it into two because it's gotten so long. the next chapter will be ben's downfall chapter, and it is going to be amazing and I'm so excited about it!!!

***chapter warnings below include spoilers:

the confession video shane took of ben will be discussed in-depth this chapter. there will be mentions of revenge porn. ilya and shane will have a conversation about what happened between ben and shane at the party. there's also a scene with implied angry/hate sex. hollanov will be fighting in this chapter but they make up almost immediately***

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

Ilya didn't know what his next move should be.

He rarely felt guilt as a consequence of his actions, but lately it had been consuming him. He couldn't stop thinking about Becca. He'd even been dreaming about her.

It had gone too far this time. He had dragged too many people that he loved into his mess. First Shane and now Svetlana. Ilya may have deserved to be punished, but they didn't.

It made him sick to think about what his wife had done for him. Sleeping with a man and blackmailing him to help Ilya avoid punishment. What made her think that she should have to do things like that to protect him? She hadn't always been this way. Ilya did this to her. He broke her.

She was right. Shane was a good person and Ilya was going to ruin him. He had already ruined him. That fucking video existed and there was nothing Ilya could ever do to change that. Even if it got taken down, Shane would never be able to be sure that it was really gone. And so many people watched it. They didn't know it was him and Shane, but it didn't matter. Him and Shane knew.

He kept walking down the cold dark streets of Montreal, unsure of where to go. All he knew was that he didn't want to go home right now.

Less than an hour later, Ilya was standing in front of Shane, apologizing for all the ways he had made his life worse.

Svetlana had told him not to drag Shane into this any further, but he needed Shane to know that this was his fault. The complaint wasn't because of anything that Shane had done. It was because of just another in a long history of Ilya's mistakes.

"Shane, I'm so sorry," Ilya told him. "I know who made the complaint. It was someone who has a reason to be mad at me."

Shane was stoic, sitting on the bed with his hands on his lap.

"What do you mean," he said harshly.

"A few years ago," Ilya explained. "I was writing a book—" he took one look at Shane's impatient face and stopped himself. "You know what, it's not all that important. The point is that I had a research assistant who was helping me during that time. Michael. And he and I developed a relationship."

Shane glared at him.

“You developed a relationship,” Shane said skeptically.

“Yes,” Ilya confirmed.

“So you fucked him,” Shane asked bluntly.

“Yes.”

“That doesn’t surprise me,” Shane said, annoyed. “And he’s the person who filed the complaint?”

“It seems that way,” Ilya said.

Shane's eyes rolled back in his head.

“Well at least now we know who did th—” Shane stopped talking before he could finish the last syllable. “Wait you said his name was Michael,” Shane asked, furrowing his brow.

Ilya nodded.

“Michael? As in Mike?”

Ilya continued nodding. “Yeah, sure.”

Shane looked panicked.

“Do you have a picture of him?”

That was an odd request.

“Why?”

“Do you or not?”

Ilya opened up his phone. He hadn't taken any pictures of them together, obviously, but he found his profile fairly easily on LinkedIn.

He handed his phone to Shane, who looked at the picture and just about passed out.

“Shane, what's wrong?”

“I've seen him before,” Shane confirmed. “At a party.”

Ilya was confused. Why did that matter?

“Okay,” Ilya said.

Then Shane pulled his own phone out of his pocket and started frantically typing.

“Shane, what's going on?”

Shane's silence scared Ilya more than anything that could have come out of his mouth.

He finally looked up from his phone.

"I think I know what happened," Shane said. "I'm so fucking sorry, Ilya. This is all my fault."

"No, that is what I'm trying to say," Ilya told him. "This is my fault. I did this, not you."

"Ilya, you're not listening," Shane reiterated.

Ilya sat down on the bed next to Shane and put his hand on his shoulder. "Tell me what happened, love, and we'll figure it out. We can make anything work. But you have to talk to me."

Shane took a breath. "I think it's better if I just show you."

Shane went into his camera roll and clicked on a video. It looked like it was a recording of a man sitting on a bed. He didn't seem to be happy about being recorded.

"What is this," Ilya asked.

If this was who Ilya thought it was, then he deserved every second of discomfort. After everything he did to Shane, violating his privacy like that, he deserved much worse. And if Ilya ever got his hands on him, he would get it.

"The guy I told you about," Shane said. "Ben."

Shane turned the volume up and scrubbed about thirty seconds into the video. Then he pressed the pause button and they both watched it play.

Let's start at the beginning.

Ilya heard Shane's voice in the recording.

What the hell was this?

You got into a fight with your boyfriend. What was the fight about?

I don't even remember.

Either tell the fucking camera, or tell the police. I don't give a shit anymore. But you're telling someone.

Fucking hell Shane, is this really necessary?

Ilya looked over at Shane, but Shane refused to return his gaze. *Holy shit.* Ilya was so proud of Shane for thinking to humiliate this guy on video like this. Frankly, it was poetic after what he'd done. Not to mention, Ilya was more than a little turned on by how he had stood up for himself. But that feeling was quickly eclipsed by guilt when he remembered that if he hadn't pushed Shane away and made him run out of his apartment that day, then he wouldn't have needed to do this. If Ilya hadn't been such a coward, then none of this would have happened.

Then came the big reveal.

I thought Mike was hitting on some guy, so I called him out. He called me an asshole. Told me I was paranoid and that he wasn't flirting.

That was it. The answer he'd been looking for. It was quick, but he definitely said that name.

Ilya caught on quickly. This Ben person was dating Ilya's former lover.

He wasn't entirely sure what this meant yet, but he had all the pieces of the puzzle. Now he just had to put them together in the right order.

"Oh my god," Ilya said. "Shane, you did it. You got him."

Shane let the video keep playing.

And that's when you met me.

Yes.

Ilya looked over at Shane again, waiting for him to stop the video. He tried to get his attention. "Shane? You can turn it off now."

But Shane wasn't listening. Ilya got the sense that Shane wanted him to watch whatever happened next.

Do you remember what you told me?

It was a long time ago.

It was less than a month ago. But that's okay, you clearly have a bad memory, so I'll tell you what you said. You said that hockey players are assholes.

Okay.

Do you think you're an asshole?

I don't know, Shane.

Then what happened?

You asked me to follow you upstairs.

And then?

You blew me.

Did you finish?

Ilya wanted to snatch the phone out of Shane's hand and throw it across the room. He didn't want to hear any of this.

What?

When I was blowing you, did you finish?

No.

Ilya didn't know what to do right now. He figured that maybe Shane was showing him this part of the video to punish him. To remind him of what happened and the role he played in all of this unfolding.

He decided to just keep watching.

So then what happened?

I asked you if you wanted to have sex.

Wrong. Try again. Get it right this time or I'll leave and you can finish this conversation at the police station.

I asked you—

Ben's face went out of the frame and suddenly they were staring at his leg instead.

We're done here. If you're not going to tell the truth then there's no point.

Wait. Wait no, please. I'll do it. I'll say whatever you want.

Don't say what you think I want to hear. Tell the truth. I want to make sure that you know what you did.

Okay, fine.

The camera lifted and re-focused on Ben's face. Ilya could tell that Shane's hand was shaking as he made the recording.

I'm giving you one last chance so you better not fuck it up. Now I'm going to ask you again, what happened next.

Um, I think I told you to turn around.

And then?

I asked you to let me fuck you.

Was that before or after you fingered me.

By this point in the video, rage had overtaken Ilya's body. He could barely think straight.

What?

I just want to make sure we have the timeline straight. Did you ask me if I wanted to have sex before or after you had already started?

I don't remember.

You really can't remember anything huh. Is it all the weed you smoke? Or maybe you just don't want to remember.

Can you please just put that thing away.

No. So you start fucking me, and what were you thinking? Did it seem like I liked it?

Yeah.

Did I say that I liked it?

I don't know.

Then how are you so sure that I did?

You seemed like you liked it.

Tell them the truth. What were the words that I actually said to you that night?"

I don't remember.

I told you that it hurt.

Do you remember that I told you that?

Sort of.

When I told you it hurt, did you stop?

Shane you told me to fuck you.

We're not talking about that right now. When you were inside me and I told you it hurt, did you stop? Or did you keep fucking me?

The second one.

You kept going.

Yeah, I guess I did.

The recording went on for a couple more seconds without any talking, and then it ended.

For a moment, neither Shane or Ilya said anything. Instead, they just stared at the phone screen until it went dark.

“Shane,” Ilya said softly.

Shane put his phone down on the pillow and climbed into Ilya’s lap. He wrapped his legs around his back and buried his face in Ilya’s neck.

“Don’t say anything,” Shane instructed. “Just hold me.”

They stayed like that for a while, at least a couple of minutes, just breathing together and listening to the beating of each other’s hearts, until Shane finally pulled away. Shane stayed straddling Ilya with his hands around the back of his neck.

"Shane," Ilya said, sadly.

"We don't need to talk about it," Shane promised him. "It's really fine."

“He hurt you,” Ilya said. It wasn’t a question. “I asked you if he did and you told me that he didn’t. Why didn’t you tell me the truth?”

“I didn’t want you to look at me like you are right now,” Shane said honestly.

Ilya felt like such a dick.

“I’m fine,” Shane assured him. “It’s over. And after today, I don’t ever want to think about that asshole ever again. We’re done with him. Okay? He’s taken up enough space in our lives.”

“He can’t just get away with it,” Ilya said.

“With what, Ilya?”

Ilya couldn’t think of the right thing to say.

“He just can’t get away with it,” he repeated.

Shane tilted his head and took Ilya’s hand, intertwining their fingers. Now Shane was the one comforting him.

“I know it’s not easy for you to understand,” Shane gently walked him through the situation he’d been quietly navigating for the past few weeks. “But I’m really fine. He got too rough with me one time. It was wrong. I’m not in denial about that. But I’m okay. I dealt with it myself, on my own terms. Now I want to move on and forget about it.”

Ilya couldn’t understand how Shane was defending the person who did this to him. Being “rough” with someone you just met isn’t normal. Continuing to have sex with him without making sure he was okay was reprehensible.

“He also put a camera in your room,” Ilya reminded him.

“Yeah that too,” Shane agreed.

Shane may have been able to forgive and forget, but Ilya couldn't get the image of that guy's stupid face out of his head. He couldn't stop picturing what he did to Shane. He wished Shane had never told him.

“I'm allowed to move on,” Shane reiterated. “He doesn't get to control my life anymore than he already has.”

Shane brushed Ilya's cheek.

“What's wrong,” Shane asked.

Ilya didn't think that Shane was taking this seriously enough.

“He recorded us having sex,” Ilya said, teetering on the edge of anger.

Shane stared back at him.

“I know that.”

“Then why aren't you more upset?”

“I am upset,” Shane confirmed. “But there's really nothing we can do about it. It's out of our hands.”

That was the difference between him and Shane. Ilya would not rest until the person who hurt Shane regretted it. He was going to destroy him. He may not have all the details ironed out just yet, but it was happening.

“So you’re just going to let him walk away,” Ilya asked. “He deserves to be punished for what he did to you.”

What he did to us.

“Can we please not do this right now,” Shane begged. “We were having a nice moment.”

Did Shane not realize how bad this was for him? Ilya could lose his job over the shit that this guy pulled.

“His boyfriend filed a complaint against me and tried to get me fired,” Ilya said harshly. “I could still get fired.”

“Don’t get mad at me,” Shane snapped. “I’m not the one who slept his way through the entire student body. I had sex with one guy. *One*. How was I supposed to know he was going to turn out to be such a freak?”

Shane pulled his hands away and put them down at his sides.

“Well maybe if you didn’t run away and have sex with the first guy you could in order to get back at me, none of this would have happened.”

Shane’s eyes widened and his mouth curved into a tight-lipped smile.

“You mean after you *told me* to go fuck someone else?”

Everything was always Ilya’s fault somehow. He blamed himself enough without Shane blaming him too.

“I didn’t make you do anything.”

“No, you’re right, you didn’t,” Shane said angrily. “You just broke my fucking heart.”

Shane stood up off the bed.

“You’re such an asshole!”

Then Ilya stood up too.

Shane headed for the door.

“Don’t walk away from me,” Ilya told him, following right on his heels. “We’re not done talking.”

“Yes we are,” Shane decided. “Because you’re not listening to me. You never listen. You only think about yourself. About what this means for your life. What about me? Did you ever stop for one second to think about how all this affects me?”

How could Shane still not understand? Ilya thought about Shane constantly. He thought about him too much for it to be healthy. He thought about him more than any married person should.

“I only ever think about *you*,” Ilya fought back. “About how you’re doing, how you’re feeling. When I’m with you, I’m thinking about you. When I’m not with you, I’m still thinking about you. I can’t fucking escape you.”

Ilya’s heart beat faster.

“I think about you when I’m in bed with my wife,” Ilya admitted.

Shane’s eyes glowed with unrestrained rage.

“You have no right to say that to me,” Shane told him. “No fucking right. Don’t ever fucking say something like that to me ever again.”

“Why,” Ilya asked, like a complete asshole. “What are you going to do about it? Run away again? Go ahead, the door’s right there.”

Shane didn’t go to the door. Instead he pushed Ilya back towards the bed and tackled him onto the mattress. Ilya caught Shane in his arms.

Shane quickly undid the zipper on his sweater and ripped it off. Then he tugged on the back of Ilya’s shirt, lifting his back up off the bed and pulling it off the rest of the way.

He arched his back and bent down to kiss Ilya on the lips.

“Take your pants off.”

Before Ilya could comply with his request, Shane reached for his belt and started to undo the buckle.

“Shane, what are you doing?”

Shane unlooped Ilya’s belt and threw it on the floor behind him.

“Stop talking before I change my mind.”

Ilya was sprawled out on the bed with Shane next to him. He glanced down at the bright red scratch marks now inhabiting the surface of his skin.

“That was...” Ilya didn’t have the words to describe what that was.

“Yeah,” Shane said proudly.

“I didn’t know you... liked that stuff.”

“Which part,” Shane asked.

Ilya looked over at him and Shane smiled.

“What,” Shane asked. “It was good. I had fun.”

There were quite a few words that Ilya could have used to describe the past several minutes, but "fun" wasn't in the top ten. Ilya wasn't sure if he had never experienced anything that intense. He wasn't a stranger to angry sex, but that was something else. It was pure hatred.

“You were so angry,” Ilya observed.

“I was just pent up,” Shane explained. “I’ve had a terrible past couple days.”

That couldn't be the only reason.

"You told me you hated me," Ilya noted.

"I didn't mean it."

"Then why say it?"

"Because I was mad at you," Shane told him. "You make me so mad sometimes. I don't understand why you're always pushing me away."

Shane scanned Ilya's face for a sign of how he was feeling.

"Why, did you not like it or something?"

It's not that Ilya didn't like it. He just wasn't expecting it.

"Hey," Shane said, putting his head on Ilya's chest. "You know how much I love you. Even when I'm mad. I never wanted to make you question that. So I'm sorry if I did."

Ilya was still a bit shaken up by everything.

"I'm sorry too," Ilya said, running his fingers through Shane's hair. "I shouldn't have been so hard on you."

Shane smiled up at him and then leaned up to kiss him, before resting his head on Ilya's chest again.

“When we break up,” Shane said out of the blue. “Do you think we’ll ever find people that make us feel like this again?”

Where the hell did that come from?

“You probably will,” Ilya said truthfully.

“Why do you think that?”

Shane had always been too curious for his own good.

“Because you’re young,” Ilya said with a shrug. “You still have plenty of time to find love.”

“Yeah but, will it be the same?”

Ilya wished he could tell him that it would.

“It will probably be different,” Ilya told a half-truth, which was better than a lie.

“Do you think I’ll ever be happy,” Shane asked. “Because sometimes, I don’t know if I could be happy if we’re not together.”

Was Shane intentionally trying to give him a heart attack?

“You will be so happy,” Ilya told him. “And you can get married and have children, and play hockey for as long as you want,” he said, painting a portrait of a life he assumed that Shane wanted. “Then when you’re like sixty, you can retire and hang out with your grandchildren.”

Shane laughed. “I don’t think I’m still going to be playing hockey when I’m sixty.”

“Hey you never know,” Ilya said.

“I think I know,” Shane said. “But thanks.”

Shane’s smile faded and he looked sullen.

“What if I don’t want to get married,” Shane asked.

“Then don’t get married,” Ilya gave a simple answer.

Shane stared at Ilya with wet eyes.

His voice trembled. “What if I don’t want kids?”

Ilya hated this conversation.

“Then don’t have kids,” he gave the same advice. “You don’t have to do anything that you don’t want.”

Shane sat up and crossed his legs.

“Can you please be honest with me,” Shane pleaded. “Just this once.”

“I don’t know what you want me to say,” Ilya told him, taking his pillow and propping it up against the headboard. “I’m not going to leave my wife.”

“I’m not asking you to,” Shane said.

“Then what are you asking?”

Shane hesitated. He spoke carefully. “Do you think it's possible to love two people at once?”

Ilya knew the answer. Yes, it was very possible.

“Yes,” Ilya said.

“I’m not telling you to get a divorce,” Shane said, clearly conflicted about the words as he said them. “I just think that there’s a way that we could make this work.”

Shane wasn’t making any sense.

“Sweetheart,” Ilya said, “That’s not how our marriage is set up. We aren’t supposed to love other people.”

“But you already do,” Shane pointed out.

“So what do you want to do about it,” Ilya asked, genuinely wanting to hear what Shane had in mind. “Do you want to move into our house? The three of us live together and switch off who sleeps in the guestroom?”

Shane was obviously grossed out by that suggestion.

“No,” Shane said. “Of course not. There has to be another option.”

“There isn’t,” Ilya said.

Shane had a look like he was thinking deeply about something.

“My mom wants me to meet with the general manager for the Montreal Metros next Saturday,” Shane told him.

Ilya sat up now too.

“That’s amazing,” he said. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

“I didn’t want to jinx it,” Shane said, understandably. “But if it all works out and I get drafted in June, then I won’t be a student here anymore.”

Ilya was listening intently to what Shane was saying.

“And I won’t be in your class anymore,” Shane went on. “I’m not saying that we could necessarily be public about it, but there wouldn’t be as much pressure on us because of the whole professor-student thing. And yeah, if people found out, it would be weird. And they would probably think you manipulated me. But we know the truth.”

“What about your parents,” Ilya asked. “Your friends? Won’t they think it’s weird too.”

“Probably,” Shane agreed. “But they’ll get used to it eventually.”

“And in this hypothetical perfect world,” Ilya asked, “Do we live together?”

Shane thought about it.

“Yeah,” he answered. “Part of the time, at least. I’d be travelling a lot. But most of the time you could live with Svetlana. And we’d still be exclusive,” Shane clarified. “You would have to stop sleeping with other people. But you already have anyway, right?”

“This is crazy,” Ilya said.

Why did it kind of make sense in a bizarre way?

“Why,” Shane asked, completely blowing past the hundreds of issues with this plan. “You love me right?”

“Of course,” Ilya said. He couldn’t possibly lie about that.

“Then what’s the problem?”

Ilya didn’t know where to start.

“I’m not letting you do this,” Ilya said sternly. “You’re not going to throw your life away for me.”

“What life,” Shane asked in a tone so terrifyingly honest that Ilya thought he might cry. “It’s not my life if you’re not in it. I need you.”

Shane reached up and pressed his hand to the side of Ilya’s face. Ilya covered Shane’s hand with his own.

“I want to *really* live,” Shane continued. “I feel like I’ve been a shell of myself for so long. I can’t remember a time where I was ever allowed to really be *me*. And I’m tired of hiding. I just want to live. And I want to be with you. I know that nothing about this situation is normal and if anyone found out about us they would definitely think I’m crazy, but I don’t care. I know you’re going to say that I’m young and that I can’t possibly know what I want yet, but I do. This is what I want.”

Ilya didn’t know how to feel when he heard Shane say these things. Part of him wanted to say yes. Be reckless. But Svetlana was right. He had given Shane false hope. Shane said he didn’t want to hide, and yet, if they were together, he would always have to hide. Coming out to the world as gay wouldn’t be easy for Shane, Ilya knew that. But coming out as being in a relationship with a married man in his thirties who met you when you were a freshman student in his class was something else entirely.

Shane’s life shouldn’t have to be *this* hard. And Ilya wouldn’t let himself be the reason that Shane was forced to hide.

“We don’t have to decide anything right now,” Ilya said. “You might change your mind.”

Ilya prayed that Shane would change his mind.

Shane nodded. “Sure,” he said. “You can think about it if you need. But I already know what I want. So the question is, do you?”

Ilya felt backed into a corner.

“I’ll think about it,” he said. Hopefully it would be enough of an answer to get Shane off his back for now while he thought of how to let him down in a way that didn’t completely shatter him.

It seemed to work, because a second later, Shane was crawling on top of Ilya again.

“We’re going to be so happy,” Shane whispered in his ear.

He couldn’t bring himself to fight with Shane again. He let him believe whatever he needed to believe.

The back of his head hit the pillow and Shane’s tongue was inside his mouth, and Ilya’s mind went blank.

Chapter End Notes

this chapter genuinely gave me whiplash to write, so i hope it’s a more positive experience to read!

i always get the most writing inspiration late at night and it’s very late where i am right now so i’m going to go to bed!

don't worry i know shane's plan is ridiculous! i'm NOT ending the story that way!!! they will be together for real in the end and ilya and svetlana will get divorced.

see you soon for the ben takedown chapter!! :) ily <3

Chapter 32: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there's 531 of you currently subscribed!! i live on compliments so leave me comments and kudos and all that other stuff so i know you're enjoying :)

i love reading your comments on the story so keep them coming!! and if you're new here, tell me why this story interested you!

we're nearing the end of shane's revenge arc. i hope you guys had fun because i sure did!! for those of you (all of you) who hate ben, get ready because he's being taken down this chapter!! in my opinion, it's a satisfying end to him as a character. hopefully y'all agree!

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

Ilya shouldn't have been considering it. Shane's proposition was completely outrageous. Ilya was married to someone else. And he couldn't very well go back and forth between Svetlana and Shane every couple nights. It wouldn't be fair to either of them. Even if Shane said that's what he wanted, which Ilya certainly was not convinced of, Svetlana didn't sign up for that kind of relationship. She didn't sign up to only have a husband fifty-percent of the time.

Except that they had already been living that way for the past month.

No. He couldn't do that to her. He pushed the thought as far out of his head as possible. He definitely needed to break up with Shane. And he *would* break up with Shane. Soon. Not yet. There was no point in breaking up with him before the end of the semester. He wanted those last three weeks. He needed to spend that time trying to work Shane out of his system.

He shouldn't have indulged Shane's domestic fantasies like that. And he definitely shouldn't have had sex with him afterwards, because Shane one-hundred percent took those two actions together to be a resounding *yes*. A *yes* to living together, a *yes* to having a life together, a *yes* to staying in a relationship beyond the end of the semester.

It was just that Shane was so hopeful. Ilya couldn't take that feeling away from him yet. Eventually he would have to put his foot down, but last night wasn't the right time.

But then why couldn't he stop thinking about everything Shane said? His plan made logical sense. If Shane got drafted, which seemed to be more or less of an inevitability, then he would be gone a lot. He wouldn't need Ilya to live with him full-time, only when he was in Montreal. It would be weird for Ilya to essentially live two separate lives, but it seemed like the only real option if he and Shane wanted to continue to see each other.

He was confident that Svetlana would not be happy about him living with someone else half the time. She wasn't very happy with him right now regardless. And she was already suspicious that his feelings for Shane were more than just physical.

He would need to have sex with her soon. He'd been avoiding it for too long. Ending a five week dry spell by going down on her for ten minutes probably wasn't the smartest move. He couldn't even get hard. *Jesus Christ*. That was fucking embarrassing. She definitely knew something was wrong. He'd never had issues getting his dick to work before, unless he was really drunk, and even then there was a physiological explanation for it.

Ilya decided to leave his conversation with Shane on the back-burner until he dealt with the complaint. That was his priority for today. He still had a few weeks left to figure out how to handle the rest of this messy love triangle.

Ilya knew that Shane wanted him to let the Ben situation go. But Ilya couldn't do that. Even if Ilya's career wasn't on the line, he still wouldn't let Ben walk away from this unscathed. Not after what he did to Shane. No, Ben was going to pay. He wasn't going to get to walk free. Ilya knew that Shane may not have realized it now, but he would regret it if Ben didn't face justice. And not just the vigilante shit that Shane pulled on him, which Ilya couldn't deny was pretty cool (maybe he didn't give Shane enough credit for just how vicious he could be), but traditional justice, complete with handcuffs and a prison cell.

If Ilya wasn't worried about implicating himself further, he would have confronted Ben personally. He wanted to hurt him. To cause him physical pain. He wanted to break every last

one of the fingers that ever dared to touch the man Ilya loved. He wanted to watch the fear in his eyes as he realized that he no longer held any power.

But obviously that wasn't going to happen. Ilya couldn't use brute force, he needed a strategy. And if everything went according to Ilya's plan, he was going to kill two birds with one stone.

From what Ilya remembered, Michael was sly. He wasn't the most intelligent person Ilya had slept with, but he was by far the most pretentious. Michael's overestimation of his ability to hold his own amongst his more naturally intelligent peers had always been a weakness of his.

After they had sex the second time, Shane also gave Ilya some more insight into Ben's fragile male psyche. Aside from being a violent asshole, Ben was also much too arrogant to believe that he would ever truly be held accountable. And that was an important piece of information that Ilya could use to his advantage. Ben wouldn't expect to be outsmarted, and he certainly wouldn't be expecting the police to break down his door at any moment and find those videos on his computer. He may have told Shane he deleted the videos, but Ilya didn't buy it. He was too much of an egotistical prick to think that he would get caught. And truthfully, that was going to make Ilya's revenge all the more sweet.

Now all Ilya had to do was pit these two idiots against each other. Ilya would let Michael think that he was two steps ahead, and then lure him into his trap.

Over the next couple days, Ilya set the first stage of his plan in motion.

He figured that if he emailed Michael out of the blue, he'd likely spook him. He needed to lull him into a false sense of security. Make him believe that he was in control. So Ilya created a fake research position and asked Marleau to circulate it amongst the graduate history students. There were only about ten of them, so it would definitely be seen by all.

Once Marleau sent him the list of interested students, Ilya was unsurprised to see Mike's name on it. He was twisted trying to get a job with Ilya knowing that he was the one who reported him. It made Ilya feel even less guilt for using him to punish Ben. He deserved so much worse for what he did.

It was also possible that Mike only wanted the job because he wanted to keep his enemies close. Ilya couldn't blame him if that was his motive.

All this scheming led up to the moment where Mike was sitting on the couch in Ilya's office, being interviewed for the fictional position as Ilya's research assistant.

Mike looked much older than he did the last time Ilya saw him, and he had grown into his looks. He had a scruffy beard and he wore glasses that Ilya wasn't convinced had an actual prescription. His formerly dirty blond hair was even darker. And he just seemed more mature.

"I guess I'm just wondering why you want to work for me again," Ilya asked, trying to feel him out.

"I need a job," Mike said bluntly. "And we work well together."

That was an understatement.

"I thought you might still be mad at me," Ilya suggested.

"Why would I be mad," he played coy.

"We didn't leave things on the best terms."

Mike shrugged. "I got over that a long time ago," he said, sounding unaffected. "This isn't about that anymore. I just need a job."

Ilya continued to lay the groundwork.

"We had some good times in here, didn't we," Ilya asked.

"I don't really remember anymore," Mike lied.

"I know things didn't work out between us," Ilya continued. "But I thought you and I ended things on good terms. I made sure you got another position and I thought you moved on."

Mike's eyes narrowed. "I did move on. A long time ago."

"Really," Ilya asked, pretending to be confused. "Because I heard that you're still carrying around some resentment towards me."

Mike's shoulders slumped a little.

"I don't know what you mean."

"I know that you made the complaint against me," Ilya said.

Ilya didn't want to sound angry. Anger was too easy. He wanted Mike to be terrified because he had no idea what Ilya was going to say next.

"What I don't understand is why," Ilya told him. "What did I ever do to you to make you hate me so much that you would want to ruin my life? Like you said, we broke up years ago. That is not something you should still be upset about."

"I don't know what you're talking about," he played dumb.

“You can stop pretending,” Ilya informed him. “Shane already told me everything.”

"Who's Shane," Mike said. "I've never heard that name before."

“Oh really,” Ilya said, nodding slowly. “That’s the story you’re going with? You have no idea what I’m talking about? You've never heard of Shane Hollander before?”

Mike shook his head and stared blankly.

“Your boyfriend is a pervert,” Ilya said. “He put a camera in Shane’s room and watched him for weeks.”

This was Ilya's plan. Give Mike a person to pin the blame on for the video and then let him to Ilya's dirty work for him.

“He’s not my boyfriend,” Mike corrected, as if that were the most incriminating part of this.

“I bet you didn't even know that there was a camera was in Shane’s room,” Ilya asked, taking a menacing step forward. "I can't imagine finding something like that on my boyfriend's computer. It must have been really disturbing."

"I didn't find any video," Mike argued.

Ilya tilted his head back.

"Oh, so you knew the camera was there," Ilya shifted the blame. “Did you watch it too? Did it turn you on to see him like that?”

“I didn’t watch anything,” Mike protested. “I still don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Then a small smirk crossed the bottom half of Mike's face.

"Are we done here, then?"

And that's when Ilya realized something.

"You posted the video," Ilya stated. "Not him. It was you."

Mike said nothing, he just kept staring Ilya down.

“Michael,” Ilya used his full name just because he could. “Do you know what an IP address is?”

Mike looked a couple inches to the left.

“Of course I do.”

God, he was a dumb criminal.

“So you know that the police can determine your internet activity based on your IP address,” Ilya explained. "If you sent that video, the police will be able to trace it."

Mike just smiled and Ilya's heart dropped into his stomach.

"Let's say that, hypothetically, what you're saying is true," Mike said. "That I found this video on my boyfriend's computer, recognized that it was you in the video. Don't you think that I would be smart enough not to send it from my own computer?"

Ilya couldn't tell whether he was bluffing.

"You sent it from Ben's computer," Ilya surmised.

"And then let's say that, hypothetically," Mike continued. "After I found this video, I kept looking on his computer and I found his secret Twitter account where he was uploading videos of all the people he fucked. And then hypothetically, I took that video of you and uploaded it without him knowing."

Maybe Ilya shouldn't have underestimated him.

"Is that a confession," Ilya asked.

"I didn't do anything," Mike said, leaning back proudly. "You're the one making the accusations here. Which I fully deny, by the way."

"You're really proud of yourself for getting away with this," Ilya asked, shaking his head. "And what about your boyfriend? He set up a camera in someone else's bedroom. Do you not think that's wrong either?"

"Maybe if you could keep it in your pants around teenagers, this wouldn't have happened," Mike said.

"He's nineteen," Ilya fought back.

"Still a teenager, you piece of shit!"

"So that's why you uploaded the video, to punish me?"

"I did it because you're a predator," Mike hurled the insult at him.

"*I'm* a predator?" Ilya acted shocked. "You posted a video that your boyfriend recorded of two people having sex. If I'm a predator then what does that make you?"

Mike shook his head, disgusted. "You deserved to be exposed after everything."

"Maybe that's true," Ilya conceded. "But I wasn't the only person in that video."

"That's why I edited out your faces."

He said it as if that somehow erased the harm he'd caused.

"It's still illegal," Ilya said. He was stunned by the utter lack of self-accountability. "Do you think that what you did was justified? Did you think that because you hate me, it was okay to hurt Shane, even though he's done nothing wrong?"

Mike closed his eyelids for a second. "I just wanted you to suffer, like how you made me suffer."

Uh oh, here come the waterworks.

"You treated me like shit," Mike said through shaky breaths. "You told me I was smart, that I was a good writer, but you didn't mean any of it. You just told me what I wanted to hear because you wanted to have sex with me. And then when I finally did, you stopped talking to me. You fired me."

"I didn't fire you," Ilya corrected him. "I just asked for a new research assistant and you went to work for someone else."

Mike didn't seem to want to accept Ilya's innocent explanation.

"Do you have any idea how it feels to wake up one day and you wouldn't even speak to me," Mike asked, showing more emotion than Ilya was comfortable with. "You manipulated me. Made me believe that you actually cared about me. But you only care about yourself. You're selfish."

Ilya was conflicted. Part of him felt like he deserved to be punished. But a larger part of him wanted to keep his career. He didn't want anything to change.

And Mike was a bad person. He shared that video with zero thought as to what it would do to Shane.

"You know," Ilya said. "I'm sorry for what I did to you. It was shitty. I have no excuses, I was an idiot back then. I'm still an idiot."

Mike nodded. "Yeah, you are."

Ilya walked over to his bookshelf and picked up a heavy book.

"You helped me write this," Ilya said, cracking open the spine and running his hands across the pages. "I credited you," Ilya told him. "Did you know that? On the very first page."

"You did," Mike asked, confused.

"Of course," Ilya told him. "I don't like to take all the credit. It makes me feel bad."

Ilya shut the book and put it back on the shelf.

"That's why, I wanted to thank your boyfriend for giving me an idea," Ilya went on. He walked over to his desk and picked up the framed photo of him and Svetlana on their wedding day. Normally the photo was always turned towards his chair. But today, he faced it towards the couch.

He pointed it right Mike's face.

"Smile," Ilya said. "Your on camera."

Ilya waved into the photograph.

Mike jumped to his feet.

"What the fuck is wrong with you," he asked, horrified. "Is there really a fucking camera in there?"

"You would be surprised by the things you can buy on Amazon."

"You're fucking crazy! You're fucking insane! What the fuck are you thinking?"

"Sit back down," Ilya commanded. "Now we're going to talk for real."

He gestured to the couch and Mike sat down again.

"What do you want," he asked.

That was more like it.

"Here's what you're going to do," Ilya set out the second half of his plan. "You are going to send an email to the Dean telling her exactly what you found on Ben's computer."

Ilya was placing a great deal of trust in Mike that he would follow through. But he didn't really have a choice, he needed his help. He couldn't pull this off by himself.

"Why should I?"

"Because if you don't then I'll tell the police that you posted the video," Ilya said casually, like it was of no consequence to him. "And then they can take it from there. I don't know if you'll actually go to prison, but it definitely won't look very good on your PhD applications." Ilya had to stop himself from smirking. "That is still what you want right? To get a PhD? Because I'm pretty sure they don't give those out to sex offenders, but who knows, maybe you'll be the exception."

"You're such a loser," Mike interjected.

"The police are already investigating who's behind that account," Ilya told him. "I'm sure they'd appreciate a tip on where the most popular video came from. Did you see it got eighty-thousand views? I'm almost flattered. Almost."

It wasn't difficult to get Mike to agree to those terms when he was backed into a corner.

Mike pursed his lips. He was angry but defeated.

"And then you'll destroy the video you took of me?"

"Yes," Ilya said. "And I keep my promises."

"Okay," Mike agreed. "Yeah, I'll do it."

"Send the email right now, while you're in here."

Mike took his phone out and started typing. They sat in silence for about ninety seconds while he drafted the email.

"Okay, I sent it."

"Then give me your phone."

"Hell no," Mike refused.

"I want to make sure that you sent it."

"I did send it."

"Then show me."

He reluctantly handed Ilya the phone. The email to the Dean was in the sent folder. Ilya quickly looked it over to make sure he didn't put anything weird in there.

Hello Dean Richards,

I'm sorry to email you like this in the middle of the day, but I don't know who else to tell. I know that there's a Twitter account that has been posting sexual videos of students, and I have information about who is behind it. His name is Ben Anderson, and he showed me the videos on his computer. I didn't know what to do, but I think the right thing is to report this to you so that you can tell the police.

Warm regards,

Michael

Ilya reached out his arm and Mike snatched his phone back.

“Are we good now? Is there anything else I can do for you,” he asked sarcastically.

“Actually yes,” Ilya confirmed. “You’re going to retract your complaint and tell the administration that we never had a relationship. And you’re going to take back whatever you told them about me and Shane.”

“You’re asking me to lie?”

“Yes,” Ilya said frankly. “Do you have a problem with lying all of a sudden? I think you’re pretty good at it.”

“Fuck you,” Mike spat.

“Your deadline is five p.m. today,” Ilya told him. “So you better get going. You have a lot to do. And if you try and pull anything, don’t think for a second that I won’t follow through on my promises. If I go down, you go down. It’s that simple. So you better get it done.”

“Fine,” he said. “I’ll do it. But even without my statement, you can't avoid consequences forever. We both know I’m not the only student at this school who hates you.”

Ilya knew he was right, but he couldn't let the guilt show on his face or in his voice. He needed to be firm.

"Get out of my office," Ilya said harshly. "Five p.m. is the deadline. And don't think of doing anything sneaky, because I will tell the police everything."

Mike stood up, but he didn't move yet.

"What," Ilya asked. "You should get going."

"Nothing," Mike said finally. "I was just sitting there thinking that it sounds like you actually love him. But then I realized that can't be true, because you're not capable of loving anyone."

Then he walked straight out the door.

Ilya walked behind his desk, slumped down into his chair and pulled his cigarettes out of his interior jacket pocket. He'd earned this cigarette. If everything went according to his plan, by five o'clock today, all this trouble would be over.

It was approximately eight p.m. and Shane had just entered Ilya's apartment.

Ilya could hardly contain himself. As soon as Shane walked through the doors, he took him by the hand and led him into the bedroom.

"Slow down," Shane said, laughing as Ilya pulled him onto the bed. "Let's at least eat the food I brought first. I need sustenance."

"Shane," Ilya said excitedly.

"Ilya," Shane said.

"They found the videos on Ben's computer."

Shane's forehead wrinkled as much as it could. "Who found them?"

"The police."

Ilya knew that Shane might feel conflicted about the news. He was ready for any reaction. Happiness, sadness, anger or a mix of the three.

"Holy shit," Shane said with an exhausted-surprised look. "Did you tell them?"

"No," Ilya said honestly.

"I don't know how to feel about this," Shane said.

Ilya could tell that the reality of the situation hadn't yet sunk in for Shane.

"He's already agreed to drop out of school," Ilya told him.

Shane's lips curved upwards. "Really? He's really going to be gone."

Ilya nodded.

"I mean the semester is basically over anyway," Shane downplayed the importance of it. "And in a few weeks I won't be coming back here ever again. But at least he got some kind of punishment."

"That's not even the best part," Ilya said, smiling from ear to ear. He kept Shane in suspense for a few seconds too long.

"Well spit it out," Shane demanded. "Tell me."

"I'd rather show you," Ilya said deviously.

Ilya reached back to get his laptop off the mattress, planted it on his lap and opened the lid. He already had the video pulled up on the screen.

It was the instagram story from an account called *lilyrain99*. He clicked on it and it started playing. Shane couldn't believe what he was seeing.

Ben was getting arrested in the middle of a classroom. A bunch of students were standing around and watching with their phones out, recording the arrest. Uploading a video of him that he wouldn't want anyone else to see on a popular social media platform seemed like a sliver of karmic justice.

Get the fuck off me! I didn't do it. It wasn't me. This is a mistake. This is all just a big mistake!

He got dragged out the classroom proclaiming his innocence. A liar to the very end.

"Are you serious," Shane said, beaming. "How the fuck—" he shook his head in disbelief. "How did they even know to look at his computer?"

Ilya shrugged in a way that surely made Shane think he knew more than he was letting on.

“I guess Mike had a change of heart and felt bad for what he did,” Ilya suggested.

Shane wasn't buying that explanation.

“You did something, didn't you?”

Ilya smiled towards the ceiling.

“Ilya,” Shane scolded. “What the hell did you do?”

He seemed mildly concerned, but he was also too happy to let whatever Ilya did bother him.

“Nothing, I swear,” Ilya promised.

“Then why do I feel like you're not telling me something?”

Ilya kissed Shane gently below his ear.

“I told you already,” Ilya said. “I would never let anything bad happen to you. I meant that.”

Shane shook his head and smiled. “I can't believe you did this for me.”

"I did it for us," Ilya said, taking Shane's hand. "You *and* me."

Shane's eyes darkened. "It's his fault for not deleting the videos. If he had just deleted them like he told me he did, then this wouldn't have happened."

Ilya could have devoured him. And from the way Shane was looking him up and down, he felt the exact same way.

"You're so fucking hot right now," Shane said.

Ilya barely waited two seconds before he pounced on Shane and pressed him into the mattress. He kissed him until he couldn't breathe.

"God I love you," Ilya said into Shane's neck. He'd never meant those words more than he did at this moment.

Shane was already unzipping Ilya's zipper.

"Yeah? Show me how much," Shane dared him.

Ilya didn't have to be told twice.

Shane was laying in bed reading a book while Ilya brushed his teeth.

Ilya spit his toothpaste into the sink and ran the water. Then he walked back to bed and crawled in next to Shane.

Ilya looked over Shane's shoulder.

“What are you doing,” Shane asked, feigning annoyance.

“I’ve never seen you wear your glasses outside of class,” Ilya said, smirking.

“Okay,” Shane said, pretending to be oblivious to Ilya’s very clear fetish for his stupid glasses.

Ilya pulled Shane underneath him and Shane gestured to take his glasses off.

“Leave them on,” Ilya said with his hand on Shane’s wrist.

“No!”

“If you leave them on, I promise to do library roleplay with you,” Ilya offered.

“I wasn’t serious about that,” Shane protested. “When are you going to let it go?”

The answer to that question was probably never.

Shane’s phone started buzzing on the side table and they both looked over at it.

“Leave it,” Ilya instructed, capturing Shane’s lips in a kiss.

Shane pushed on Ilya’s chest.

“It might be my mom,” Shane said. “I was supposed to call her about the meeting thing.”

Ilya had almost forgotten about that.

“Way to ruin the mood,” Ilya said as he sat upright.

Shane retrieved his phone and checked the messages. He showed the screen to Ilya. Rose had sent an attachment, accompanied by a message:

Holy shit

Call me

Ilya took the phone out of his hand.

“Hey!”

Shane grabbed for his phone but Ilya held it just out of his reach.

“You have to earn your phone privileges,” Ilya said.

Shane pulled Ilya down into a kiss, and once Ilya was distracted, Shane grabbed the phone from his hand and pushed him away. Ilya laughed as he collapsed on the mattress.

An incoming call banner appeared across the top of his iphone screen. Shane clicked on it and swiped to accept the call.

“Don’t say anything,” Shane told Ilya.

Ilya mimed zipping his lips.

Shane put the call on speaker phone.

“Hey,” Shane said casually.

“Ben got arrested.”

“What,” Shane tried to act surprised. “For what?”

He was so adorable when he tried to lie.

“Did you not watch the video I sent you,” Rose asked, astonished that Shane could be so out of the loop. “It was on Lily’s story.”

“No, I haven’t watched it yet,” Shane told her.

Ilya laughed again and Shane kicked him.

“Shane,” Rose accused. “Are you with someone?”

“Of course not,” Shane said, sounding extremely guilty. “It’s ten-thirty, I’m already in bed.”

“Alone?”

Ilya shrugged in Shane's direction.

"Yes, alone," Shane objected to Rose's line of questioning.

"So if I was coming by right now to see you—"

"Are you coming to see me," Shane interrupted her.

"No," Rose admitted. "But if I did, would you be alone?"

Shane was saved by Lily's voice in the background of the call.

Tell him about the video.

"I already told him," Rose said back. "Sorry, can I put you on speaker? Lily's here."

"Yeah, of course."

"Actually can we just FaceTime?"

"One second," Shane told her and muted the call. "Stay over there and don't talk."

Ilya raised his eyebrows and nodded.

Shane sat up, grateful he had chosen to put a shirt on before getting in bed. He quickly tidied his rustled hair and sent the Facetime request.

The screen widened when the call was accepted and he could see Lily and Rose's faces.

"So what's up," Shane asked.

Rose squinted. "Are we just going to ignore the fact that you clearly aren't home right now."

Ilya decided that now would be a good time to rub Shane's foot and kiss his shin.

"Yeah that would be great," Shane said, trying to kick Ilya off him.

"Shane it was fucking crazy," Lily said, immediately launching into her story. "I saw the whole thing. The police came into our five o'clock Physics lab and arrested him. They put handcuffs on him. Full perp walk. It was insane."

"That is insane," Shane said. He could feel Ilya's smirk from a foot away.

"I guess he had a bunch of revenge porn on his computer," Rose told him. "Like what the fuck? They found a camera in his room. He was recording all the people he had sex with."

"Oh my god," Shane said exaggeratedly. But Lily and Rose seemed to believe that Shane's shock was genuine.

"I knew that guy was a perv," Rose declared. "Didn't I tell you? He always gave me the creeps."

"You told me," Shane agreed.

“I can’t believe you thought he was hot,” Rose said, incapable of reading the room.

Lily took the phone out of Rose’s hand and it was now a view of the ceiling. Ilya could hear them whisper-fighting.

Don’t make him feel bad!

I wasn’t!

“Guys I can still hear you,” Shane said.

There was a pause.

You didn’t press mute?

“I can *still* hear you,” Shane reiterated.

“Sorry Shane,” Rose said as her face finally came back into frame. “I just meant that he was the worst and I’m glad he’s gone for good.”

“Me too,” Shane agreed.

“It’s pretty wild that two predators at our school got arrested in the same week,” Rose aptly pointed out.

Shane couldn’t do anything but agree. “Yeah, wild.”

“We’re gonna go to bed,” Lily said. “But we’ll see you on Sunday.”

Shane seemed like he hadn’t realized that he had made plans with Rose and Lily for Sunday.

“What’s on Sunday?”

"Oh, was I not supposed to tell you," Lily said coyly. "You still have to act surprised."

"Surprised about what?"

"That's perfect, just act exactly like that."

"No seriously," Shane said. "I hate surprises."

"Your mom and dad are throwing a party for you," Rose said. "To celebrate your birthday and the end of the semester."

Ilya could tell that Shane was not excited by that revelation.

"Don't tell Yuna we told you or she'd kill us for ruining the surprise," Rose warned him.

"I won't say anything," Shane said, unenthusiastically. "I'm gonna go to bed too. I'll see you on Sunday."

"Goodnight Shane," Lily said.

"And goodnight to whoever is in bed with Shane," Rose added.

"Bye." Shane ended the call.

Shane took a couple seconds to process what just happened. Then, wordlessly, he lay down on the mattress and Ilya crawled on top of him.

"Where were we," Ilya asked rhetorically.

"I think you were about to do this," Shane said, bringing him into a kiss that melted Ilya's insides.

That's the moment that he knew he couldn't settle for only three more weeks of this. He needed more.

Ilya wanted an entire lifetime.

Chapter End Notes

what do you guys think? did you love it? was this ending good enough or do you still need ben to die? maybe we can just pretend he got hit by a bus or something on the way to the police station.

the other day I realized something... i think that ilya's character is more likable/redeemable in shane's pov because shane sees ilya as a better person than he actually is. but he's much less likeable in ilya's own pov, because ilya sees himself as a worse person than he actually is. it's interesting how i'm starting to get new insight into my own writing choices, because that was definitely not something i was doing intentionally.

this is personally my favourite chapter so far, but I'm curious to know what yours are, so tell me your favourite chapters of this story in the comments :)

also yuna hollander is going to become a bigger part of the story soon, and the mother-son dynamics will be interesting!

see you soon!

Chapter 33: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey everyone!!

it's a short chapter from me today!

thank you guys for all your comments, i really do appreciate them so much and read every single one 

enjoy :)

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

Shane had always known that he was bound for the NHL.

Throughout his time in high school, he had been actively scouted. Back then he just wasn't quite ready yet. It had been Shane's choice to go to university. He wanted to get an education. It was important to him. But lately he had been feeling like he couldn't get out of this place fast enough. After their miserable loss to Ottawa, their team was officially out of the playoffs. All of his friends seemed to be moving forward in their lives and getting into relationships. Jackie and Hayden had each other. They were freaking married. He would miss Rose, but she had Lily now. And the Ben situation had resolved itself (with a little help from Ilya). What would Shane have if he stayed here? A shitty hockey team where he was forced to play with a rapist?

There's nothing Shane wanted less than to be on this campus for another semester and have to constantly be reminded of all the shit he'd been through.

That morning, Shane had woken up early and feeling relatively positive, which wasn't always a given. He practically had one foot out the door for class when his mother called him. He hesitated before answering, but he knew that Yuna never called unless there was a good reason.

"Hey mom," Shane said, holding the phone to his ear and trying to sound normal.

“Shane, honey, how are you doing?”

Her tone was equal parts maternal and business-like.

The sound of his mother’s voice nearly made Shane break down in tears. It had been a whirlwind seventy-two hours with Dallas turning himself in, followed by Ben getting arrested in the middle of class and Shane's team losing their spot in the playoffs. But he couldn’t tell her everything that was going on with him. It was too much for anyone except him to handle.

“Good. What’s up?”

“Can you get on a call with Farah?”

“What’s it about?”

“I don’t want to spoil the surprise,” Yuna said.

Shane had been to dinner with the general manager of the Metros just a couple days prior, and it went well. He knew what the surprise was already.

“Holy shit,” Shane said. “Are you serious?”

“I know,” Yuna agreed, barely able to contain her excitement over the phone. “I’m so proud of you. I wish I could be there to see your face.”

“Me too,” Shane said. “How’s dad?”

“Over the moon,” Yuna said. “You know how much he loves you. He can’t wait to see the Hollander name on the back of your Metros jersey.”

Shane was smiling to himself in an empty room.

“You’re going to be amazing,” Yuna said excitedly.

“I have to go to class,” Shane informed his mother. “But I can do the call afterwards?”

“Okay, call me when you’re done.”

“I love you mom,” Shane told her. “This is a great thing.”

“Love you baby,” Yuna said. “I can’t believe you’re going to be in the NHL. I couldn’t be prouder of the man you’re becoming.”

Shane felt a twinge of guilt at his mother’s praise.

“Thanks mom, bye.”

It was really happening. He was going to play in the NHL and live with Ilya and it was all actually happening. He just had to survive the rest of the semester first.

Shane was approximately a third of the way through his Kinesiology exam review lecture when a tall grey-haired woman walked through the doors and interrupted the professor. She whispered something in his ear, and then he announced that they were going to take an early five-minute break.

Everyone started to stand up and stretch their legs.

“Shane Hollander,” his professor called, staring straight at him. “Can you come down here for a moment please?”

It must have had something to do with the videos the police found on Ben’s computer. They probably wanted to interview him or something. Jesus, that was the last thing that Shane wanted. They had enough evidence, didn’t they? They caught him red-handed. Why did they need his help now?

Shane slowly approached the front of the classroom.

“Yes,” he said. “You wanted to see me.”

“The Dean wants to see you,” the professor said. “You’ll have to ask one of your classmates for their notes on what you missed.”

Shane looked at the grey-haired woman.

“Am I going to miss the rest of class?”

“I’m not sure,” she said.

“Well, what is the meeting about?”

“They didn’t tell me anything.”

Fuck, fuck, fucking fuck.

Shane jogged to his desk and quickly packed his laptop into his backpack and slung it over his right shoulder.

He followed the grey-haired woman, whose name he still hadn't learned, to the Dean's office.

"She's waiting for you," she said. "You can just go inside."

Shane didn't even tell her, *thank you*. What would he be thanking her for exactly? This was a nightmare.

Shane kept his hand on the doorknob for a few seconds before twisting his hand to the right.

When the door opened, two heads turned.

The Dean wasn't the only person in the room. There was also another woman around Shane's own age. Her eyes followed him as he entered.

Who the hell is this?

"Hi Shane," the Dean said neutrally. "Please come in and take a seat."

Shane didn't appreciate being summoned here like this and then being told where to sit. He wished she would just tell him why he was there and put him out of his misery.

He took a few steps forward and sat down in the empty chair behind the Dean's desk next to the younger woman.

“Shane, this is Jessica,” the Dean said, gesturing to her.

Jessica smiled kindly at him.

“I’m going to let her speak now,” the Dean told Shane. “But if I need to step in at any point, I will.”

Jessica nodded at her. “Thank you Dean Richards,” she said, before turning to look at him. “Hi Shane, I’m sorry we’re meeting like this.”

Shane didn’t know how to respond.

“That’s okay,” Shane said, his eyes darting back and forth between the two women. “Can someone please tell me what this is about?”

Jessica went on.

“I know that you probably don’t want to talk to me,” she prefaced. “But we have something in common.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Shane denied.

She continued. “And I know that right now you might not want to see him get in trouble, and you feel like you have to protect him, but you don’t.” She tried to relate to him. “I know how you’re feeling.”

“How would you know how I’m feeling?”

“Because I used to feel the same way,” she said. “But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that what he did to me wasn’t okay.” Shane looked away when she tried to make eye contact. “He shouldn’t get away with what he did to us.”

To us?

This must have been one of Ilya’s former student girlfriends.

“Can I go back to class,” Shane asked the Dean.

“Not yet,” she said. “Please just listen to what Jessica has to say.”

Shane said nothing. He avoided Jessica’s gaze as she continued her pitch.

“I was in Professor Rozanov’s Russian History class last Winter,” Jessica said. “I thought he was so great. He was really invested in me. And, at the time, I thought that was normal.”

Shane was going to be sick.

Him and Jessica weren’t the same. Ilya loved him, it was different.

“I’m sorry for what happened to you, but nothing happened to me,” Shane told her. “I don’t know why you brought me here,” Shane said to the Dean. “I already told you that Professor Rozanov didn’t do anything to me. So please stop trying to make me say that something happened when it didn’t.”

Shane didn’t want to hear any more. He wanted to get out of that room as fast as possible. He was willing to tell any lies he needed to in order to make that happen.

“Shane,” the Dean said. “A few weeks ago, there was a conversation that took place in the hallway that was overheard by some other students. Do you know what I’m talking about?”

He knew exactly what she was referencing. His fight with Ben. If he wasn’t sitting in front of the Dean right now, he would have cried.

“I know what you’re talking about,” Shane confirmed. “But that was a misunderstanding.”

Shane tried to think quickly on his feet.

“Not that it’s any of your business,” he said as a preface, “But me and Ben Anderson sort of dated for a few weeks.”

The Dean gave Shane a sympathetic look.

“I was one of the people he recorded,” Shane said, hoping that sharing that information would earn him some kind of trust.

The Dean shook her head empathetically.

“I’m sorry Shane,” she said, sighing. “That whole situation was just awful. I can’t imagine.”

“Yeah, it’s been really difficult” Shane said, really playing up how upset he was about it. “But anyway, he knew that I was in Professor Rozanov’s class, and I guess there were some rumours about us that obviously weren’t true, and he believed them. He cornered me in the hallway and yelled at me about it. But he was wrong, nothing ever happened between us.”

Shane could tell by their faces that he hadn’t entirely convinced them that Ilya and him weren’t together, but maybe the story had gotten so convoluted that it would be difficult for them to pick apart.

“He was very possessive,” Shane said. He wasn’t necessarily lying. He was just using certain information for his own benefit. “He would accuse me of having sex with people even when I wasn’t. He was really paranoid.”

The Dean nodded cautiously.

“The last time we met, I told you that there had been a complaint filed against Professor Rozanov,” the Dean said.

Shane agreed, “Yes, you told me.”

“That complaint was withdrawn yesterday,” she finished.

The timing of the complaint being retracted was suspicious, and surely the Dean knew as much.

“Okay,” Shane said.

“There was another student who came forward, but now he is no longer willing to cooperate in the disciplinary process,” the Dean informed him.

Shane was beginning to understand what was happening here.

“And that’s why you need me,” Shane guessed. “You want me to lie so that Professor Rozanov gets in trouble?”

“We’re not asking you to lie,” the Dean said firmly.

“Then what do you want me to do,” Shane asked. “Nothing happened! No matter how many times you try to convince me that it did.”

Jessica interjected.

“I’m sure this is really hard for you,” she said comfortingly. “If you asked me last year, I never would have been strong enough to do this.”

Why were people always throwing around words like “brave” and “strong”. It felt so patronizing. He wasn’t any of those things.

“Can I go now,” Shane asked again.

The Dean looked very disappointed. Almost angry. But at who? Shane? What had he done except refuse to take part in something that didn’t concern him. He wasn’t Ilya’s victim. He wasn’t *anyone’s* victim. So why should he help them take him down?

“Our investigation into Professor Rozanov’s sexual activities with students is over,” the Dean said.

Thank God for that.

Shane’s happiness lasted about one-and-a-half seconds.

“Based on the results of that investigation, the senate disciplinary committee is going to call for a formal hearing,” the Dean continued.

Shane should have waited for her to finish before breathing a sigh of relief.

“When the hearing is scheduled, the witnesses will be contacted,” she said. “And you may be called upon to testify.”

Shane wasn’t going to testify at any hearing.

“I won’t testify,” he said frankly.

“It’s not optional.”

“Why would you even want me to testify,” Shane asked. “I’ll just say the same thing that I’ve always told you. So are you just doing this to punish me?”

“No one is punishing you Shane,” the Dean told him.

“We’re trying to help you,” Jessica said.

Shane stood up. They had no right to compel him to stay here.

“Shane come back,” the Dean said. “Let’s continue our conversation.”

“I want to talk to my lawyer,” Shane said.

“You’re not on trial,” the Dean said, as if the suggestion were ridiculous.

“I’m going to talk to her anyway,” Shane told the Dean. He looked at the look of defeat on Jessica’s face and felt horrible. “I’m really sorry,” he said to only Jessica. He meant it. He had no anger towards her.

Shane left out the doors and walked straight back to his dorm room. They couldn't do this to him. No one was going to make *him* do anything. He'd had enough of feeling powerless. In a few weeks, he wouldn't even be here anymore.

Shane did something that he only did when he wanted to go nuclear.

He called his mother back and told her everything.

Chapter End Notes

i know this chapter may feel like filler but it's going to set up the resolution of this part of the story so that we can finally wrap up shane's time at college!! i'm very excited about what the story will look like beyond that so stay tuned (and i'm always open to suggestions for what people want to see - besides a HEA which is obviously going to happen)

also i'll just say that there's not going to be an actual disciplinary hearing. this whole situation will be resolved in the next couple of chapters, i'm not going to draw it out any further than that

love you guys, see you soon :)

Chapter 34: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

i don't really know what to say here except hello to the 544 of you currently subscribed!!

today's chapter is focusing on the fallout from shane's meeting with the dean and is entirely centred on a conversation between shane and yuna. how do you think she will react to the news of his and ilya's relationship?? (spoiler: probably not well.)

hope you like it :)

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

From the moment he told his mother – more like blurted out – that he was in a relationship with Ilya over the phone, Yuna had been in full momager mode. He knew that she would react this way, by throwing herself into finding a solution to his problems. It only confirmed his suspicions that he should have told her the truth sooner. Yuna could be cold sometimes, even harsh, but she was the perfect person to turn to in a crisis. He knew the judgment would come eventually, and she would tell him her real feelings. She would probably lecture him for being so careless and irresponsible with his life. But for right now, she was handling the situation calmly and rationally.

Still, even after admitting to his mother that he had been sleeping with his professor for the past two months, Shane was discreet enough to kept certain details to himself. His mother would have a heart attack if she knew that there had ever been a sex tape of him on the internet, even if the account was gone and the person who recorded it was currently sitting at home awaiting trial.

On Friday afternoon, Shane drove to his parents' house in Ottawa. He was grateful for his decision to lease a car about a month ago, figuring that he was going to need his own transportation soon enough. And he was tired of taking Ubers everywhere. It was very useful in moments like this where he needed to drive a long distance.

Shane enjoyed long drives, he always had. Being alone with his thoughts wasn't always a good thing, but something about being alone on the open road was helping him clear his mind.

Shane arrived around dinner time and used his key to open the front door. When Shane entered the house, he saw Yuna sitting at the kitchen island. She was always cool under pressure, but he could tell she was anxious. She was doing her best to stay calm even though she must have been so scared for his future. No one cared more about Shane's future than Yuna – including Shane himself.

This wasn't just Shane's problem, it was hers too. She was his manager. And his actions had put their entire family at risk.

They made eye contact and she held up a finger to Shane to signal that she was on a call.

"We can make them sign an NDA," Yuna suggested, speaking into the phone laying on the table.

"Mom, please stop."

"Shane," Yuna shut him down. "I'm talking to Claire right now." Claire was their lawyer. Mostly she handled contracts and business negotiations. This situation was surely outside of her area of expertise.

Yuna turned her attention back to the phone call. "Sorry Claire, Shane just got home."

"I know that this is a high stress situation," Claire commiserated. That was an understatement. "But right now, we need to focus on containment."

"The process is anonymous," Shane said, speaking for the first time on the call. "Hi Claire, sorry it's Shane here."

"Hi Shane," Claire said, solemnly. "I'm sorry you're going through this."

Shane almost didn't respond.

"Thanks," he said simply. He didn't need sympathy, he needed a solution. Thankfully, his mother thrived on resolving problems.

"From what it sounds like, Shane wasn't the only student he did this to."

Did this to? Ilya didn't do anything *to* him.

"Of course," Yuna said. "It's never just one."

Shane wanted to say something to defend Ilya. To reassure his mother that their relationship was consensual and not something he needed to be saved from. But he couldn't bring himself to say anything.

"We'll fucking sue the shit out of them," Yuna said into the phone. "Right, Claire? We can do that right?"

"Well-" Claire started before Yuna cut her off.

"I mean, he's the victim here," Yuna said, making Shane's stomach drop. "They can't punish the victim. This is discrimination. The Dean told this other student what happened to Shane. They outed him! It's homophobia. It's wrong. They're sick if they think we're going to let them get away with this."

"I understand your frustration," Claire said. "I tend to agree with you."

"We'll sue them for discrimination," Yuna repeated. "And then we'll sue them for letting one of their professors have sex with my eighteen-year-old child."

Nineteen, Shane thought silently. He had been nineteen for almost a month now.

Claire hesitated before answering.

“I mean... Shane is an adult,” Claire stated a fact. “So even if the school was negligent in some way, it’s not like what this man did was criminal.”

Thank you, Shane said to himself. He was an adult, so there was nothing illegal or abusive about their relationship, no matter how distasteful everyone seemed to find it.

“Deplorable, maybe,” Claire said. “But not criminal.” Shane had thanked her too soon.

“Is it not assault,” Yuna questioned. “This is someone in a position of authority.”

“That’s not how the law sees it,” Claire said matter-of-factly. “If it wasn’t consensual, then there could be a case for sexual harassment. We could go after the university for vicarious liability if they should have been aware of what was going on and had a duty to stop it from happening.”

“Yes, sexual harassment,” Yuna agreed, looking up at Shane. “We’ll sue them for sexual harassment.”

Claire gently tried to calm his mother down.

“Hopefully it won’t come to litigation,” Claire said. “That would only make this into a more public scandal. Right now, I can get to work on drafting a demand letter to the Dean with a list of stipulations. Number one, obviously, is that Shane is not going to be testifying at any hearing.”

“They can’t make him do that anyway, can they,” Yuna asked.

“As long as he’s a student,” Claire began her answer, “There are likely internal procedures to compel him to testify.”

“But he’s not going to be there in a few weeks.”

“Yes, but he was a student at the time of the... incident.”

Yuna put her hands up in frustration. “This is fucking ridiculous,” she said. “Sorry for my language, but fuck. This is so disturbing that they can drag an innocent person through the mud like this. And for what? If you want to fire this creep, then fire him, but don’t ruin my son’s life over it. Shane didn’t do anything wrong!”

“I know,” Claire agreed. “And we’re not going to let them get away with this. Nothing is going to happen to Shane.”

“Something already happened to him,” Yuna said, making Shane’s stomach lurch in dread.

“Let me make some inquiries and I’ll call you back in a couple hours,” Claire told them.

Yuna took a deep breath in. “Thank you,” she said. “I’m so glad we have you, especially at a time like this.”

“Of course,” Claire said. “We are all on the same team here. We all want what’s best for Shane.”

“Thank you, Claire,” Yuna said, sounding emotionally exhausted. “I’ll be waiting for your call.”

“Okay, talk soon.”

“Have a good evening.”

“You too,” Clarie said. “Alright bye.”

Yuna slammed her phone down on the counter and took a deep calming breath to ease her nerves.

Shane waited a couple seconds before addressing her.

“Hi mom,” Shane said meekly.

Yuna softened, but only slightly.

“Hi honey,” she said. “Are you okay?”

Shane nodded. “I’m a little freaked out, but I’m mostly fine.”

“We’re going to sue them,” she said. “We won’t let them get away with this. They’re targeting you. It’s harassment.”

“It’s not harassment if it’s true,” Shane said.

“Yes, it is, honey.” Yuna shook her head. “It isn’t fair for them to drag your name into this.”

She looked at Shane and half smiled, before pushing his hair out of his face and kissing his forehead.

“Have you eaten today,” she asked. “I know sometimes you forget to eat when you’re stressed out.”

Shane shrugged.

“I’ll make us a salad,” Yuna said. “And some soup. That’s always comforting, right? I always used to make homemade soup for you when you were sick.”

She didn’t give him the option, he was going to be forced to eat something. “Sit down.” She pulled out her chair and Shane took her place, sitting at the kitchen island watching her begin chopping vegetables. “Dad won’t be home from work for a couple more hours.”

“Did you tell him,” Shane asked nervously.

Yuna shook her head.

“I didn’t know if you wanted me to.”

“I’ll probably have to tell him eventually,” Shane said.

“Why,” Yuna asked, grabbing a bigger knife. “We’re going to figure this out quickly. Claire is going to handle it honey, don’t you worry. She’ll send that letter and hopefully the administration will realize that it just isn’t worth the fight.”

She poured some liquid that appeared to be chicken stock into the dutch oven and began stirring the ingredients together. She wiped her hands on a dry dish towel. Once the soup began to simmer, she put the lid on top and turned to face Shane again.

“Mom,” Shane said in a weak voice. “I’m really sorry.”

She nodded. "Let's just try to get through this," she said.

"I fucked up so bad," Shane told her.

"Baby," Yuna said sadly. "You do not have to apologize for what that man did. I just pray that this situation doesn't hurt you any more than it already has."

"He didn't hurt me mom," Shane told her.

"You don't have to make excuses for him," Yuna said. "He's a monster."

"He's not a monster," Shane said, horrified. "And he didn't hurt me. I deserve to be blamed too. I was just as responsible for what happened as Ilya was."

"No, you weren't," Yuna said sternly. "The fact that you can't see how messed up this whole situation is, only proves to me that you were way too young for him to get involved with."

Yuna sighed loudly.

"We didn't even know you were gay," Yuna said. Her words blew through Shane like a bullet.

His parents didn't even know that he was gay. He wasn't sure when he was planning on coming out to them, but now he had no choice.

Shane just stared at her.

“You are, aren't you,” Yuna asked in response to Shane’s hesitation. “You never said anything to us, but I had a feeling. Call it mother's intuition.”

Shane tried to compose himself so he didn’t start crying as soon as he spoke.

“I’m gay mom,” Shane said quietly. “I’m so sorry.”

Yuna nodded slowly, before walking over to him and wrapping him in her arms while he stayed seated. He buried his face in her hair. She smelled like cinnamon and safety.

“It’s okay baby,” Yuna said, softly rubbing his back in circles. “You know that I love you no matter what. And this isn’t something that you need to be sorry about.” She took his face in her hands. “Don’t ever apologize for who are you are. Do you understand me? You are Shane Hollander. And Hollanders are strong. And we aren’t going to take this shit. We’re going to figure this out and then you’ll never have to look back again.”

“What about Ilya,” Shane asked, still concerned about Ilya’s future as much as his own. “What’s going to happen to him?”

“I don’t know,” Yuna said honestly. “But that’s not our problem.

“It is *my* problem,” Shane refuted her. “He’s in trouble because of me.”

Yuna wouldn’t understand exactly what Shane meant by that statement. She would probably assume that he meant Ilya was in trouble for having sex with him at all. What Shane actually meant was that if he hadn’t fled Ilya’s apartment and hooked up with a random guy, and then proceeded to let that random guy fuck him again and again in Shane’s dorm room, then he wouldn’t have had the opportunity to record him and Ilya fucking, and then that random guy’s boyfriend wouldn’t have figured out Ilya and Shane were sleeping together and filed a complaint with the administration that mentioned Shane’s name.

“This is very serious,” Yuna said.

“I know, mom,” Shane recognized the severity of the situation. “Ilya could lose his job.”

“I don’t care about that,” Yuna harshly clarified. “You could lose your career. Everything you’ve worked so hard for since you were a toddler. Everything we’ve worked so hard for. Your dad and I have sacrificed so much for you.”

Yuna took a beat. “Maybe he should lose his job.”

Shane’s heart sank. She didn’t understand. That was his boyfriend she was talking about. Yuna was on Shane’s side, but he needed her to be on both of their sides. His *and* Ilya’s. Ilya was his future, just as much as hockey was his future. They were going to live together after the semester was over, so she would have to accept their relationship soon enough.

“Mom, don’t say that,” Shane pleaded. “Ilya didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Like hell he didn’t,” Yuna argued. “You are nineteen, Shane.”

“Yes, which means that I’m an adult.”

“Barely.”

“I’m old enough to choose who I sleep with.”

“Not when the person you’re sleeping with is almost forty.”

“He’s thirty-four,” Shane made a distinction.

Yuna rolled her eyes. "Well, excuse me. That's completely different then." She used sarcasm to cope with the trauma of recent events. "He took advantage of his position," Yuna said matter-of-factly. "You're a student. There are rules against these sorts of things."

"I know it seems fucked up on the outside," Shane acknowledged. "But he doesn't deserve to be punished for something that we both wanted."

"You don't know what you want," Yuna said. "I don't care what happens to him," Yuna said angrily, with a hint of disgust in her voice. "I care about you. Your future. I won't let you jeopardize it over some creepy old man."

"It's not like that, mom! He cares about me." Shane realized how childish that sounded. "I wanted it," Shane said, fiery in his resolve. "Does that not count for anything? I wanted it more than anything I've ever wanted in my entire life. He didn't do anything that I didn't want him to do."

"Shane calm down," Yuna said. "No one is blaming you. I'm only trying to help. We're all trying to help get you out of this situation with minimal damage. Don't you want to play in the NHL? You do still want that right? Because this story is not something you want following you around."

Shane was ready to explode.

"Because we're both guys," Shane asked.

"No," Yuna said, before backtracking. "I don't know, Shane. What do you want me to say? He's married. He's your professor. It just looks bad."

"Mom," Shane said on the verge of tears. "I love him."

"I know you feel that way now," Yuna acknowledged his feelings. "But that doesn't make it better. What he did was wrong."

Shane's felt the tears escaping his eyes and rolling down his cheeks.

"Shane, baby, it's okay," Yuna assured him in a soothing motherly voice. "It's really okay. We're going to get through this."

"You don't understand," Shane said, deeply upset by his mother's reaction. Why couldn't she be happy for him? Why couldn't she see the good in Ilya like he did?

"Then help me understand," Yuna said. "What am I not seeing?"

Shane didn't know how to make her understand. Maybe no one could understand what existed between him and Ilya except him and Ilya.

"I think that when you see us together, you'll understand," Shane told her. "You'll see how happy he makes me. Then maybe you'll change your mind about him."

Yuna brought Shane into an embrace while he softly cried on her shoulder.

"I don't think I'm going to change my mind," Yuna told him. She was simultaneously gentle but firm. "But we don't have to talk about all that right now. Let's just have our dinner, okay?"

Shane sniffled and then retreated from their hug and wiped his eyes. He nodded in defeat.

Chapter End Notes

today i found a new hollanov professor/student fic that i am so excited to read!! but i'm saving it for when i'm done this obviously. i have so many fics in my "marked for later"

but oh well, writing this comes first!! i always say, write the stories you want to read and that's what i'm trying to do here :)

let me know in the comments if you have any suggestions or things you want to see before this fic is over because i'm so curious and sometimes you guys say things that i hadn't thought of before <3

love you bye :)

Chapter 35: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

hello to the 556 of you currently subscribed! talk to me in the comments if you'd like :)

it's meet the parents time!!! how do you think it will go? (probably about as terribly as the last chapter)

for the record, i love yuna so much and i think she's totally justified in her fears about her son's relationship. yuna is not a villain here, she is a rightfully concerned parent. it will definitely take a while for her to get fully onboard, but i think she'll at least start warming up to the idea soon.

anyways hope you like it :)

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

That night, Shane called Ilya from his bedroom in his parents house. He had made a plan to invite Ilya to come to the party Yuna and David were throwing for him on Sunday. It wasn't technically a "surprise" party anymore, since Rose and Lily had spoiled the surprise aspect, but it would be a good opportunity to introduce Ilya to his parents so that they could see that their relationship was totally - mostly - normal and there was nothing for them to be worried about.

"Hey," Shane said when Ilya picked up the phone. "Were you just never going to call me?"

Ilya sounded like he was locking a door. *Right*, he was at home. He probably didn't want to have this conversation in front of Svetlana.

"Of course I want to talk to you," Ilya said. "I was just waiting for you for call me first."

That explanation made enough sense.

"I wanted to ask you something," Shane told him, ominously.

"Hollander, I am not going to have phone sex with you while you're at your parents house," Ilya said in jest.

"Yeah, that definitely wasn't what I had in mind," Shane said. "I wanted to ask if you wanted to be my date to a party on Sunday."

The line went silent for a few seconds. "What kind of party?"

"A surprise party," Shane said. "For me."

"How is it a surprise party if you know about it already?"

"Point taken," Shane agreed. "It's not about the party, it's about meeting my parents."

There was more silence.

"Why do you want me to meet your parents?"

Because you're my boyfriend, stupid.

"They're worried about me," Shane said. "And I think that if they met you, then you could show them that there's nothing to be concerned about."

Shane knew that it wouldn't be easy to convince Ilya to meet his parents. He would be right to suspect that they wouldn't like him very much after everything Shane had been put through recently because of him.

He changed tactics. "Don't you want to see me," Shane asked in a mix of sexiness and whininess. "If you come and act nice, I'll give you anything you want afterwards."

He could hear Ilya's mild laughter. "You're not seriously bribing me with sex?"

"If that's what it takes," Shane said, realizing that he truly was not above offering sexual favours to get what he wanted.

Ilya didn't respond right away. "If it will make you happy," he said hesitantly, "Then yes. I will meet your parents."

Shane smiled to himself. Ilya really must love him if he was willing to do this for him.

"I'll text you the address," Shane said. "I can't wait to see you," he added.

"See you soon, my love."

Ilya was the one to end the call. Shane held his phone to his chest and exhaled.

The party was a small affair. Just his parents, Rose and Lily, Jackie and Hayden, a few of Shane's friends from high school, a few of his parents friends, Shane's agent, and a couple of guys from the hockey team that Shane could actually stand.

So maybe it wasn't actually that small.

Ilya arrived about an hour late, which was annoying, but it also meant that Shane could avoid the awkwardness of Ilya being forced to talk to his parents right away. He was going to give them time to warm up to each other, and then, tactfully excuse himself from their conversation and try to secretly listen in from behind a wall.

Shane greeted Ilya at the door. He was carrying a gift box covered in blue wrapping paper.

"You didn't have to get me anything," Shane said, taking it from his hands and shaking it to hear what was inside.

"Don't shake it," Ilya instructed. "Who does that?"

"Is it breakable," Shane asked, still shaking it but more gently.

Ilya laughed in amusement and kissed Shane's cheek. "Happy birthday, sweetheart."

A smile tugged at Shane's lips.

"I liked your other present better," Shane said, flirtatiously.

Ilya raised his eyebrows. "I can give that to you again later if you want."

Shane was about to say something witty in response when Rose walked into the foyer and began silently observing them. She licked the extra icing off her fork.

"Don't stop on my account," she said, pointing her utensil at them.

Shane stared at her blankly. "You really want to hear us talk about how we're going to have sex later?"

Rose turned to leave. "You guys seriously need help," she chastised their lack of decorum.

Shane and Ilya both laughed as she stormed away.

"Come with me," Shane told Ilya. "I'll introduce you to everyone."

"Everyone," Ilya asked nervously. It was fun to see him nervous for once.

"Yes everyone," Shane confirmed. "They're going to like you," Shane said, trying to convince himself as much as convince Ilya.

Shane took him by the hand and led him inside. They talked to Farah and her wife for a while, who acted delighted to see the two of them together, if not a little taken aback by the age difference. Shane supposed that was probably the best reaction he could hope for. When Farah asked what Ilya did for work, he told them that he was a professor, but he didn't tell anyone that he was *Shane's* professor. There was no need to open that can of worms right now. This was supposed to be a day to celebrate Shane, and he didn't feel like putting his relationship on trial.

Shane had given Rose permission to tell Lily about him and Ilya, and she seemed to be okay with it. Her exact words were, "Love is love," which is exactly how Shane felt too.

Jackie and Hayden were obviously weirded out by the whole thing. When Shane told them that Ilya was his boyfriend, Jackie kept her hand on Hayden's arm the entire time like she was trying to stop him from saying something stupid. If anyone at this party had a problem with their relationship, they were considerate enough to keep it to themselves.

That was until, two hours into the party, Shane made the mistake of going into the kitchen for a slice of cake. When he emerged back into the crowd of people standing around in his parent's living room, he saw his mother talking to - really more like yelling at - Ilya.

“Am I supposed to make small talk with you,” Yuna asked rudely. “You’re dating my nineteen-year-old son.”

Ilya nonchalantly took a sip of his iced tea.

“Do you have nothing to say for yourself,” she asked, incredulous.

“Yuna, maybe lay off a little,” David interjected.

“Why,” she asked, because her reaction felt totally warranted. “It’s true. He comes into our home and doesn’t even apologize for what he did.”

“What did I do exactly,” Ilya asked, being bolder than he should have been in this situation. “Shane is an adult.”

“He’s a teenager,” Yuna repeated. “He’s only had one girlfriend. He doesn’t know what he’s doing. You took advantage of that.”

“He’s not as innocent as you seem to think,” Ilya said, only inflaming Yuna’s anger.

“He’s your student,” Yuna said, shocked at Ilya’s lack of contrition. “You groomed him.”

“Jesus, Yuna,” David said. “Calm down, honey.”

“No, I’m not going to calm down, David,” Yuna said. “Or are you now okay with our son sleeping with a married guy?”

“Of course not,” David agreed.

That's when Shane approached them, carrying a flimsy plastic plate with a piece of chocolate cake.

“What’s going on,” Shane asked, noticing the tension immediately. “Is everything okay?”

Ilya looked over at Yuna and then back at Shane.

“Everything’s great,” Ilya said, obviously lying. “But I’m going to leave now and let you spend some time with your family.”

“No, don’t go,” Shane pleaded, walking over to stand next to Ilya. He turned his anger towards his mother. “What did you say to him?”

Yuna shrugged. “I just wanted to know what a thirty-four-year-old man is doing having sex with a teenager,” she said.

“Mom,” Shane berated. “You’re making him uncomfortable.”

Ilya repeated himself. “I’m going to go.”

“Then I’m leaving too,” Shane announced. Shane exited the situation momentarily to put his plate down on the coffee table. "Let's go."

“No,” Ilya said firmly. “You will stay here and visit with your family.”

Shane looked over at his mother, who was clearly disturbed by the way Ilya was giving her son orders.

“Stay,” Ilya commanded through a whisper.

“I thought I was spending the night with you,” Shane whined. David and Yuna were looking at each other now, communicating their discomfort without using words.

Ilya looked at Yuna and then at Shane again. He put his hands on Shane's shoulders.

“I will come back for you in a little while okay?”

"Promise?" He didn't believe that Ilya would really come back.

Ilya seemed like he was about to kiss Shane but stopped himself. So Shane leaned up and finished what he'd started. It was a quick peck, nothing passionate, but it got Shane's point across.

This was his boyfriend. No one should mess with him.

“I'll text you,” Shane told him.

Ilya nodded. “You have a beautiful home,” he told Yuna and David. He sounded half-sarcastic and half-sincere, which was basically Ilya's typical disposition.

Then Ilya walked out the front door and Yuna and Shane continued their standoff in the living room.

“Why did you do that,” Shane asked angrily. “You made him leave.”

“I didn't make him do anything,” Yuna argued.

David stepped in to mediate between his wife and son. “Let’s just take a breather,” he rationally suggested.

“Fuck you, no way!”

“Shane,” Yuna said in shock.

“Apologize to your mother,” David told him.

“No,” Shane said angrily. “She should apologize to Ilya for how she treated him.”

“I’m not apologizing,” Yuna announced, equally as stubborn as her son. “He had the audacity to come into *my* home after what he did to you.”

“He didn’t do anything to me,” Shane argued. “And I wanted him here. This is my party, isn’t it?”

David interjected again. “We have guests,” he reminded them, even though no one was paying attention to their conversation. “This can wait until later when we’re alone.”

Shane exhaled. “Mom, can I please see you upstairs?”

“Sure,” Yuna eagerly agreed. She turned to her husband. “Please tell our guests that me and Shane are fine. Shane just isn’t feeling very well and he’s going to lie down for a while.”

“I don’t think they’ll believe that mom,” Shane snapped. “Why don’t you just tell them that my mother is a control freak? I’m sure they’ll believe that.” He smiled sarcastically.

His father, deeply uncomfortable by any hint of conflict, simply said, “I probably won’t tell them anything.”

Yuna followed Shane upstairs to his bedroom. He closed the door behind them and she sat down on the bed while Shane continued standing. She picked up one of his childhood stuffed animals, a tiny giraffe, and held it to her heart.

“Ilya is my boyfriend,” Shane told her. It was a terrible way to start off. “You can't treat him like that.”

“He’s not your boyfriend, he’s your teacher,” Yuna corrected.

“He’s both,” Shane half-agreed. “And soon he’s only going to be my boyfriend.”

Yuna stared up at him with disappointment.

“I don’t understand how my smart son could make such terrible decisions,” she said, punching Shane in the gut. “You have never done anything this stupid before.”

She should’ve waited to say that until he told her the next part.

“We’re moving in together when the semester’s over,” Shane dropped the bomb.

Yuna gave him a disappointed look. She was intimidating, but Shane wasn’t backing down. If he was going to be in a real adult relationship, then he needed to act like an adult. And that meant that he could make his own choices without asking for his mother’s permission.

“I’m not getting my own place,” Shane told his mother. “I’m going to move in with Ilya.”

Yuna left him in suspense for a few more seconds with no response.

“Doesn’t he have a wife,” Yuna asked, her anger permeating every word.

This was awkward. Shane nodded, “Yes.”

“So he’s leaving her,” Yuna surmised.

That answer was even more complicated.

“Not exactly.”

Yuna’s gaze burned into his flesh.

“What do you mean, not exactly?”

Shane tried to play it off as casually as he could.

“He’s going to be with both of us.”

His mother frowned and then she looked like she was going to throw something.

“Are you kidding me, Shane?”

“No, I’m being serious,” Shane said, attempting to sound confident.

“It’s bad enough that my son was having an affair with his married professor, but now he wants to be in some kind of polyamorous triad with him and his wife?”

Where did she even learn that word? Shane barely knew that word.

“It’s not a ‘triad’,” Shane protested. “We’re not having threesomes or whatever.”

“Oh, I’m sorry,” Yuna sarcastically apologized. “Excuse my incorrect terminology. What am I supposed to call it when my son is having sex with a man who is also having sex with another woman?”

This probably wasn’t the right time to tell her that Svetlana was also going to continue having sex with other people.

“It’s just a regular relationship,” Shane asserted. “I get that it seems untraditional, but nothing about my life is very traditional. Why should this be any different?”

His mother had the same look on her face that she used to get when he was a kid right before she told him to go to his room and think about what he’d done.

“What am I supposed to say to that,” she asked sincerely. “Am I supposed to be supportive of my son living with a married man? It’s wrong, Shane. It’s not how we raised you.”

“How is it wrong if we all agree to it,” Shane asked naively.

“If his wife agrees to this type of arrangement then she’s just as screwed up as he is,” his mother said. “Because nothing about what you’re telling me is normal. You’re nineteen, Shane!”

“You didn’t care that I had sex with Jessica,” Shane pointed out. “You gave us condoms.”

“She was your age,” Yuna stated the obvious distinction. “That’s a completely different situation.”

“Are you sure you’re not just angry that I’m not going to end up with a woman,” Shane asked, spitefully. “Are you just mad that I’m not going to live out some fucking white picket fence fantasy of the perfect life you had planned for me?”

Yuna shook her head, sadly, like she couldn’t believe that he thought so little of her.

“I don’t care who you date as long as you’re smart about it,” Yuna told him, and it sounded like she truly meant it. “This isn’t smart, Shane. You’re better than this.”

Shane thought about all the ways in which he hadn’t been very smart about sex lately. He fucked a stranger in a bathroom at a frat party without using a condom. There’s a video of him having sex with his professor that was posted online.

There were probably many other instances that didn’t immediately come to mind.

“Well at least I’m finally happy,” Shane shouted. “Doesn’t that count for anything? I’ve never been happier than I am when I’m with him.”

Shane was so tired of everyone expecting him to be perfect all the time. Why couldn’t he be allowed to fuck up like everyone else without being accused of ruining his life?

Why did it matter who he chose to love? What difference did it make to anyone else? It was none of their business.

“I just wish that you could find happiness with someone age appropriate,” she said, understandably concerned. “And someone who’s single. You’re sleeping with someone’s husband, Shane. I don’t think you seem to understand how wrong that is.”

Shane hated that what his mother was saying made sense.

“So if he wasn’t married then you would be okay with it,” Shane asked.

“No, of course not,” Yuna responded. “He’s still in his thirties, and he was your professor. It’s disturbing on every level. It’s such a betrayal of his responsibilities. I don’t understand why you would want to be with a man who clearly has no morals.”

“It’s not wrong if he loves me,” Shane argued. “I bet that arrangements like this are actually a lot more common than people think.”

He was parroting the things that Ilya told him, but they weren’t as convincing coming from Shane.

“Not everyone is meant to be monogamous,” Shane said, cursing the words as they left his mouth.

His mother’s frown turned into a small smile and she started laughing.

“What are you talking about,” she asked through uncomfortable laughter. “Did he tell you that? Just look at the shit he’s putting in your head, honey. He’s brainwashing you.”

“He didn’t brainwash me,” Shane said weakly. “I was the one that suggested living together. I was the one who told him that he could be with both of us. He wanted to break up with me and I wouldn’t let him.”

“You’re only doing this because you think that’s what he wants,” Yuna said, astutely. She knew him too well for Shane to succeed in lying to her. She was his mother after all.

“This is happening,” Shane told her. “With or without your support. Obviously, I hope that you support us, but it’s happening either way. We’re going to be together.”

Yuna wiped her eyes, which were clearly tearing up. Shane was tearing up too.

“Okay,” she said, reluctantly accepting her son’s decision. “If you want to ruin your career and everything you’ve worked for your entire life, go ahead. But don’t expect me to be supportive. As your manager, I will do my best to protect you and keep this out of the press. But as your mother, I can’t sit around and watch my baby throw his life away. I love you too much to just watch it happen.”

Shane didn’t fully understand what she meant by that.

“So you’re not going to talk to me anymore unless it’s about business,” Shane asked.

“For now,” Yuna confirmed. “Yes. I’m sure that one day, eventually, if you stay together, then I’ll be able to handle it. But right now, I can’t watch you do this. It hurts me too much.”

He couldn’t believe this was happening. He knew his mother would be upset by this news, but he never thought that she would actually disown him over it.

“I’m sorry you feel that way,” Shane said truthfully. “But Ilya didn’t ruin my life. He loves me.”

“I just don’t think that’s true,” Yuna told him. “If he loved you then he wouldn’t let you blow up your life. He wouldn’t have gotten involved with you in the first place.”

Shane didn’t have a good argument to rebut what his mother just said.

“Well I hope you change your mind about him one day,” Shane said, being unrealistically optimistic.

“I hope you do too,” Yuna said harshly.

The party had ended twenty minutes ago and all the guests had left. Shane was sitting on the couch in the living room letting the TV run in the background and contemplating his life choices when Rose walked back in through the front door.

Maybe she forgot something.

“Hey,” Shane said. “Everything okay?”

She pointed over her shoulder. “Rozanov is still outside,” she said.

Shane jumped to his feet. “He is?”

“Yeah, he’s just sitting in his car staring straight ahead,” Rose said, clearly weirded-out.

Shane jogged over to Rose. “I’ll go talk to him,” Shane said. “He’s probably just waiting for me.”

Shane went outside and found Ilya’s car still in the driveway of his parent’s house. He opened the passenger side door and got inside. Ilya didn’t even look at him. He was probably still mad about earlier. Shane thought that he had every right to be mad after the way Yuna spoke down to him.

“Hey,” Shane coaxed.

Shane leaned over to kiss him and Ilya put his hand against Shane's chest and held him at arms length.

"Something wrong," Shane asked, already knowing that there was.

"I'm sorry," was all that Ilya said.

The look on his face made Shane's heart stop. This couldn't be good.

Chapter End Notes

dun dun dun...

that went about as well as could be expected

the other day i went back and re-read the first chapter of this fic and i really do feel like this fic has evolved so much and i've changed my course for this story a million times so i appreciate those of you who've stuck with me for so long. ilysm <3

comments and kudos always appreciated (that's how i know you are still enjoying what i write)!! i always love reading everything you guys have to say about this story :)

Chapter 36: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

surprise double feature!!

did you really think i would leave you on a cliffhanger lol. i had to give you ilya's pov after the last chapter.

hope you enjoy :)

**warning for mild violence in this chapter (shane hits ilya across the face during in argument)

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

Shane's mother was right about him. Ilya wasn't a good person and he didn't deserve Shane's love. If that afternoon had showed Ilya anything, it was that Shane had a good life before he came into the picture and screwed everything up.

"Something wrong," Shane asked in that sweet naive way of his, not yet understanding the pain that Ilya was going to inflict on him in mere moments.

Ilya reminded himself it was for his own good. Shane wouldn't realize it now but he would eventually. And then he would thank him for being so selfless.

"I'm sorry," Ilya said solemnly.

"Why, because you don't want to kiss me in my parent's driveway," Shane teased. "I can wait a couple hours."

Ilya watched as Shane's hand travelled over the gear shift into and rested on Ilya's inner right thigh.

“Unless you want me to start now,” he asked with a competitive glint in his eyes. “See if I can make you come before we get home. Would you like that?”

How did Ilya predict that Shane would make it so difficult to leave him?

“I promised you whatever you wanted,” Shane reminded him.

Ilya removed Shane’s hand from his thigh and carefully placed it back on Shane’s own lap.

“What’s wrong,” Shane said, still oblivious. “You don’t think you’ll last?”

Ilya didn’t even look at him.

“I can’t do that anymore,” Ilya said firmly.

Shane smiled awkwardly. Ilya wasn’t usually one to turn down sexual advances.

“Ilya it’s fine,” Shane said. His tone was irritated, but not angry. Not yet. “Relax, I wasn’t actually going to blow you while you’re driving on the highway.”

“No,” Ilya clarified, staring straight ahead out the front windshield. “I can’t do any of this anymore.”

Shane’s mood noticeably shifted.

“What the fuck are you talking about?”

“I’m breaking up with you,” Ilya said, leaving no room for negotiation.

Shane’s lips slowly moved apart, but no words came.

“I’m sorry,” Ilya told him.

Shane said nothing. His jaw clenched and he pressed his chin outwards.

Finally Ilya turned to look at him.

“I’m sorry Sh—”

Shane slapped him hard across the side of the face. Ilya knew he deserved that response.

He softened his tone.

“Shan—”

Shane slapped him again before he could even get the word out.

“Don’t you dare say my name.”

Ilya didn’t know what else to say that wouldn’t earn him another hit.

“I’m sorry.”

“You’re not sorry,” Shane said angrily. “You did this on purpose.”

Ilya didn’t intend to fall in love. It had never happened to him like this before. How was he supposed to know it would end up this way?

“I am sorry,” Ilya argued.

“I’ve given up so much for you,” Shane said tearfully. “My mother probably won’t ever speak to me again after today.”

“I didn’t mean to—”

“Do you think I don’t see what you’re doing,” Shane asked.

“What am I doing?”

Ilya wasn’t even sure what Shane meant.

“You’re trying to make me hate you,” Shane accurately perceived. “And it’s not going to work. You want me to leave you, but I won’t. I’m not going to get out of this car unless you promise me that we are going to be together.”

“I’m not trying to do anything except break up with you.”

“Yes you are,” Shane said. “You’re trying to manipulate me into thinking that this is my idea. But it’s not. I don’t want to break up.”

That was exactly what Ilya was doing, but he couldn't come out and admit that.

"No, I'm not."

"Then what's going on," Shane asked. "Why are you doing this? Why now? I thought we agreed—"

Ilya could hear the sound of Shane's heart breaking. His own heart was breaking.

"We didn't agree on anything," Ilya told him. "I told you I would think about it."

Shane scoffed. "You want this just as much as I do," Shane stated. "I know you do. You're just afraid."

"I'm not afraid," Ilya objected.

"Yes you are," Shane said. "You're afraid because you don't know if this is going to work, and you're scared of fucking up my life. But my life was already fucked up, Ilya."

"Your life is not fucked up," Ilya disagreed.

"Yes it is," Shane told him. "There is nothing in my life that's just for me. Everything I do is to make someone else happy. I used to love hockey, and now... I don't even know."

Ilya was even more confused than he was a minute ago.

"I thought you wanted to play in the NHL."

“I do,” Shane said clearly. “I want it more than anything.”

“Then why are you risking it all for me,” Ilya yelled.

“Because you are the first person I ever wanted,” Shane told him, his voice nearly breaking. “And I don’t think I’m going to find this again with anyone else.”

“You will,” Ilya promised him. “I know you will. Shane, it’s not even a question. Anyone would be lucky to be with you.”

It was the truth.

“But I won’t want them,” Shane said, pleadingly. “Even if they want me, I still won’t want them. I want you, Ilya. It’s only ever been you. It’s only ever going to be you.”

Ilya threw his head back against the headrest.

“I didn’t want to hurt you,” he said.

“Well I’m hurt,” Shane irritably admitted. “I’m fucking hurt. The guy I love doesn’t want to be with me anymore.”

“That’s not true,” Ilya denied. “I do want to be with you.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

Ilya wished he was better with his words, but every time he dared to look at Shane’s face his mind went blank. He kept his eyes fixed on the steering wheel.

“I’m married.”

That wasn’t the real reason, but maybe if he made Shane believe that it was, Shane would stop fighting and accept the inevitable.

“Who cares,” Shane said, as if Ilya’s words were incomprehensible. “I don’t care if some stupid piece of paper says that you’re married. You’re mine, Ilya. You know that by now, don’t you?”

“I am not yours,” Ilya said cruelly. “I am hers.”

“You *are* mine,” Shane stood his ground. “You are *my* boyfriend. You don’t even sleep with her.”

Ilya saw an opportunity to hurt Shane even more, to beat him down and make him give up.

“Yes I do,” Ilya said. He could sense Shane’s anger ruminating in the passenger seat. “I lied before, when I said that I didn’t.”

Shane’s eyes darkened and Ilya figured there was a fifty-percent chance Shane might hit him again.

“Why would you lie about that?”

Ilya made something up.

“Because I thought it’s what you wanted to hear.”

Shane took a short breath in. Then he pushed down on the inside handle to get out of the car. It was still locked.

“Let me out of the fucking car,” Shane screamed. “Let me out!”

Ilya waited another couple seconds, risking more of Shane’s rage.

Shane screamed so loud Ilya thought his eardrums were going to burst.

“Let me the fuck out of this fucking car!”

Ilya was horrified. He had never seen Shane so mad.

“If you don’t let me out of this car in the next five seconds, I’ll call the police.”

“That’s dramatic,” Ilya told him.

“I hate you,” Shane told him, eyes watering. “I mean it. I fucking hate you.”

“No, you don’t,” Ilya said, because he knew Shane better than Shane knew himself.

He should have just let him storm away, but he couldn’t. Something in his heart stopped him. Against his better judgment, Ilya kept talking.

“I don’t want you to leave like this,” he said. “I hate seeing you so upset.”

“Then stop making me upset,” Shane told him. “Stop being such a fucking dick to me all the time. Stop pushing me away. I’m done putting up with it.”

”Shane, I can’t be with you,” Ilya said softly. “It would never work. You always knew this was going to end eventually.”

Shane took a second to formulate a response. When he finally started talking, he spoke carefully.

“I thought we could figure something out.”

What does that mean?

“Figure what out?”

“I don’t know,” Shane shrugged. “When you and Svetlana wanted to see other people, you guys figured it out, right? Why can’t we just figure something out so that we can keep seeing each other?”

“You want to keep having sex?”

“Of course,” Shane said without thinking it over.

“But why?”

“Because I love you,” Shane yelled before breaking out in a terrifying maniacal laugh. “You’re so stupid. I fucking love you.”

“But we could never really be together,” Ilya told him. “We could never live together like other couples do. I already have a wife.”

“I could move into your apartment,” Shane offered. “And you could spend the nights there when I’m in town.”

That was an insane plan. How long had Shane been thinking about this? When Shane had brought up the concept of them living together part of the time, he was sure that Shane wouldn’t seriously go through with it.

“I don’t want that,” Ilya said.

“Why not,” Shane asked. “It’s kind of perfect. I’ll be gone a lot of the time, so it’s not like we would be able to spend every night together anyway.”

“Shane, I can’t.”

“Why can’t you,” Shane repeated. “I promise you’ll love living with me.”

Ilya already knew that he would love living with Shane.

“That’s not the problem.”

“Then what’s the problem,” Shane asked. “You think you’ll get bored of me, right? But you won’t. I promise, I can make you happy.”

“You already make me happy,” Ilya conceded.

Shane put his hand back on Ilya’s thigh and began inching upwards.

“Think about it,” Shane said in a low tone. “Living together in secret. It’s kind of hot?”

What the hell was Shane thinking? Ilya barely recognized this version of Shane. Where was the sweet guy he met two months ago?

“I don’t care if no one else knows,” Shane told him. “We’ll know. That’s good enough.”

He still didn’t understand.

“I don’t want that with you,” Ilya told him firmly.

“So you want it with her but not me?”

“Yes,” Ilya agreed.

“That’s a lie,” Shane called him out. “That’s a fucking lie and we both know it. You don’t love her.”

“I don’t...” Ilya didn’t know how to articulate what he was feeling at that moment. “My relationship with Svetlana is not... complete. Do you understand?”

“Yeah, I know,” Shane reiterated. “You don’t fuck each other.”

“That’s not what I meant,” Ilya clarified. “There is something missing from my relationship with Svetlana, and that is why it doesn’t bother me when we sleep with other people. But if I was going to be with you, I would want everything. I would want all of you, not just parts of you. I would not want to hide you away in my apartment and go home to my wife.”

Shane looked at Ilya with passion burning in his eyes. He didn't know if Shane was going to kiss him or hit him again.

He watched as Shane threw off his seatbelt and swung his leg over the gear. Shane grabbed the back of Ilya's neck and straddled him in the driver's seat.

"I love you," Shane said before devouring his lips. "You can't leave me. I won't let you."

Ilya kissed him back until Shane started moving his hips and Ilya realized that this kiss had probably gone too far.

"We can't," Ilya told him. "Not here."

"I know," Shane agreed. "I just need... fuck."

Shane quickly kissed him again before dismounting and travelling back to his own seat.

"Drive," Shane demanded. "Now."

Chapter End Notes

ilya tried to break up and shane just said "no that's not happening" lol. this wouldn't work in real life but this is fiction so i can write whatever i want :)

love you guys 💜💜

Chapter 37: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there are currently 564 of you subscribed to this story! i really appreciate all your lovely comments and hearing your thoughts on this fic!!

i'm always relieved when people say that they like the way i wrote shane's character because i know it's different from his personality in the book/show. personally i love writing this version of shane, who can sometimes be spontaneous, self-destructive, stubborn, and has fears of abandonment. but he's also a good person and a good friend. he's the moral centre of this story. he's my baby, and he will be happy in the end if it's the last thing i do!

all that to say, we're still dealing with the fallout of the last couple of chapters (this chapter is pretty smut heavy but there's a lot of important dialogue and decisions being made too!)

hope you enjoy it :)

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

They barely made it to the bedroom.

Technically they didn't even last the full drive back to Montreal. Once the sun had set and it was dark, Shane forced Ilya to pull over on the side of the highway so that they could make out.

Ilya mentioned something in the moment about how this was probably illegal, but they did it anyway. Shane straddled Ilya in the driver's seat, pulled hard on Ilya's hair and nearly made him come in his pants.

After that close call, Shane kept his hands to himself for the rest of the car ride home. They listened to the radio and Shane stared out the window and tried not to think too much about the fact that he didn't have a mother anymore after today.

When they arrived at Ilya's apartment, they quickly got undressed and under the covers. Shane could hardly get two words out before Ilya was inside him. Those two words were *fuck* and *me*.

They had been going at it for a few minutes in missionary when Shane's phone started buzzing. Why did this keep happening? They had the worst timing ever.

Shane picked it up off the table and rolled his eyes when he saw who was calling.

"Ugh," Shane huffed. "It's my mother."

"Do you want to stop?"

"Hell no."

Shane threw the phone across the mattress.

"If you need to take that, you can."

"Ilya," Shane said, starting to feel annoyed. "You're literally inside me right now. I'll call her back later."

"What if it's important?"

Why was he choosing now of all times to be so difficult?

"So is this," Shane told him. "Whatever she's calling about can wait."

Before Ilya could even open his lips to speak again, Shane followed it up with “Just fuck me and stop talking about my mother.”

Ilya smiled, instantly switched back from his supportive boyfriend mode and started thrusting again.

“You feel so good,” Shane panted. “I missed you.”

“It’s been three days,” Ilya teased.

“Yeah, it was torture,” Shane said seriously. “I thought about you every day. Needed you—*mmmmhm*—inside me.”

“You thought about me?” Ilya seemed very happy about that admission.

“Yes,” Shane said through short breaths.

“Did you touch yourself?”

Shane felt his cheeks getting warmer. “Maybe,” he conceded. “Sometimes.”

“Did you come?”

Shane shook his head lightly.

“You told me I had to ask your permission to come.”

Ilya's face contorted into a look of confusion, like he couldn't believe what had just come out of Shane's mouth.

"So you haven't... this entire time? Not since we started..."

"What— no," Shane said. He was too horny to have to think right now. "Not by myself, no."

"Because I told you not to?"

Shane nodded but didn't answer verbally. He couldn't focus on anything except the sensation of Ilya's cock filling him and driving him crazy.

The pace of Ilya's thrusts gradually became slower, and Shane dug his fingers into the skin of Ilya's ass to pull him further inside him.

"I didn't say you could stop."

The vein on Ilya's forehead pulsed and turned a deep shade of pink.

Ilya pulled out, almost all the way, and then pressed back inside him fully.

"How are you real?" Ilya was in awe. "You can't be real."

Shane brought his right hand to the left side of Ilya's face. He slipped his thumb into Ilya's mouth and Ilya accepted it, swirling his tongue around it and sucking.

Shane whimpered.

Ilya mumbled something under his breath, and Shane desperately wanted to know what was so secretive that Ilya couldn't bring himself to say it in English.

"Feel me," Shane demanded, wrapping his legs around Ilya's waist. "This is real."

A long moan was drawn from Ilya's lips.

"I love you," Ilya said as if he couldn't hold it in any longer.

Well that answered Shane's earlier question.

"I know," Shane breathed. "Love you so much. Love your cock," he panted. "Love fucking you."

"I can't live without you," Ilya said. "I wouldn't be able to breathe."

"Then don't," Shane gave the easy solution. "Don't live without me. Don't leave."

Ilya didn't say anything.

"Live inside me," Shane offered.

Ilya re-adjusted to give himself more leverage and began to thrust harder, deliberately hitting Shane's prostate with each roll of his hips.

A series of high-pitched noises escaped Shane's throat. "Yes-*mmm*-right there-*oh shit*."

"Give it to me," Ilya commanded. "Give me what's mine."

"Take it," Shane challenged. "Take what's yours."

It didn't take long after that. Once he started coming, a ringing sound filled Shane's ears and didn't hear the rest of what Ilya said in response.

Ilya kept driving into him, chasing his own release. Shane looked up at him with determination.

"You gonna come for me?"

"Yes," Ilya grunted. "Fuck, I'm so close."

"Let me see it," Shane demanded. "I want to watch you come all over me."

Ilya gave Shane half a dozen more messy thrusts before he pulled out. Shane furiously jerked him off until he started shooting out thick ropes of come onto Shane's stomach.

He took his hand away and Ilya inserted himself back inside of Shane once again and kept thrusting for a few more seconds until he went completely still. Then he collapsed on top of Shane, burying his face in Shane's neck, still breathing heavily. Shane soothingly combed his fingers through Ilya's hair.

"You did so good," Shane whispered to him lovingly. "So good."

After a moment, Ilya's breathing returned to normal and he began to shift when Shane stopped him.

“Don’t pull out yet,” Shane requested. “Just a few more minutes, please.”

Ilya silently laid his head down on Shane’s chest and Shane held him in his arms.

“Does she make you come like that,” Shane asked, jealousy dripping from his tongue.

He couldn’t help being envious. It wasn’t fair that Svetlana had the life that Shane wanted for himself. She could live with him, be married to him, and everyone was allowed to know. She didn’t have to worry about whether loving Ilya would ruin her life.

He knew that he had no right to be mad about Ilya and Svetlana sleeping together. They were married to each other. Shane was the other man in their marriage.

Except for the fact that Ilya lied about it. Why would he do that? It’s such a shitty thing to lie about.

“No one else makes me feel like this,” Ilya said. Normally he would’ve believed him, but now Shane had to wonder if he was even telling the truth.

“Are you sure,” Shane asked, wanting Ilya to convince him of the veracity of his answer.

“Very,” Ilya answered. “No one else comes close to this. To what we have right here.”

Shane wondered if Ilya was just telling him what he wanted to hear.

“Just remember that if you leave me, this is what you're giving up,” Shane said. He wanted to remind Ilya of exactly who he belonged to. On paper, Ilya was Svetlana’s husband, but everything else of Ilya’s belonged to Shane. And Ilya’s body clearly knew the score.

Ilya looked up at Shane and caught his eye. “I know,” he said, completely serious.

“Good,” Shane said, finally satisfied that Ilya was being honest. “You can pull out now.”

Ilya laughed. He leaned up to kiss Shane and then slipped out of him. He rolled over and then stood up off the bed. They were both still covered in each other’s come. Shane grabbed a tissue off the side table and cleaned his stomach.

“Shower,” Ilya suggested.

“I’ll be there in a minute,” Shane told him. “I’m just gonna call my mom back first.”

Ilya disappeared into the bathroom and a few seconds later Shane heard the water begin running.

He found his phone, which had fallen on the floor in the heat of their sex. He retrieved it and saw that he had a missed call and one new voicemail. He entered the password and listened to Yuna’s message.

Hi Shane. It’s Yuna. I know it’s late but can you call me back? I just got off the phone with Claire... It’s good news.

Shane instantly felt lighter. He couldn’t handle any more bad news. He re-dialed his mother's number and put her on speaker phone. He counted three rings before she answered.

“Hi Shane,” she said robotically. “Is now a good time?”

Was this what their relationship was going to be like from now on? No pleasantries, no talking about their lives? It was just going to be about business. Shane Hollander was a brand. A product for Yuna to manage, and nothing more.

“Hi Yuna,” Shane said, as if they were on a first name basis.

“Shane, I’m still your mother,” Yuna said sternly.

“Really,” Shane asked brattily. “Because I’m pretty sure that mothers don’t abandon their children every time they make a decision they disagree with.”

“I didn’t—” she stopped herself from saying whatever it was that she was about to say. “Let’s not get into that right now.” She prevented him from re-starting their earlier fight. “Claire heard back from the legal department for the university late this afternoon. You are not going to be required to testify at the disciplinary hearing. Just thought you might like to know that information.”

Shane was ecstatic.

“Wait really,” Shane asked, unable to believe that something was actually going his way for once. But the universe did owe him. “That’s amazing.”

Shane’s excitement was short lived when he remembered that the hearing was still likely going ahead regardless of whether he was forced to participate.

“Did they say anything else about the hearing? Is it still happening?”

“As far as I know,” Yuna said sharply. Shane thought that she sounded tired, like she had been up all night without sleeping.

“Okay well, thanks for letting me know,” Shane said, dreading how quickly this call was coming to an end. “I guess we’ll talk again at some point.”

Yuna was quiet for a second. "I'll tell Claire that you said thank you."

"Okay," Shane said. His tone didn't rise to the level of rude but it wasn't kind either.
"Thanks."

"I hope you realize how much worse this could have been if you didn't have people in your life protecting you," Yuna said, judgmentally.

Shane didn't need her commentary.

"That's why I told you about it," Shane answered.

"You should have told me way sooner," Yuna insisted. "You can't keep things from me. How am I supposed to protect you if I don't know what's going on in your life?"

Shane sighed.

"Am I talking to you as my manager or as my mother?"

"Both," Yuna said quickly. "But especially as your manager."

Shane didn't want to have to keep secrets from his mother. It tore him up inside.

"What do you want to know," Shane asked, ready to finally be honest.

He heard Yuna pulling out a chair. She was sitting down for this conversation.

“How long have you been together?”

“Two months,” Shane said. “On and off.”

“How did it happen?”

Shane couldn't really recall the exact details of how it started. All he knew was that one day everything was normal and the next day he was in Ilya's office getting eaten out and fingered on top of a desk.

“I initiated it,” he finally answered.

She spoke softer for the next question. “Did he... pressure you?”

“Oh my god mom,” Shane said, frustratedly. “Of course not.”

“Well you can't blame me for asking,” she said emphatically. “He's a lot... more mature than you,” she said, using a nicer synonym for old. “And you're so young, and you've never had a boyfriend before.” She paused. “At least I don't think you have. I guess you probably wouldn't have told me if you did.”

“He would never do anything like that,” Shane told her honestly. “He would never pressure me. Physically or in any other way.”

Yuna didn't say anything back.

“Mom,” Shane asked into the phone. “Are you still there?”

"Yeah I'm still here," Yuna said, sighing. She sounded deflated. "I have to go," she said. Shane knew that wasn't the truth. There couldn't possibly be something so urgent at midnight that she had to end the call right now. She just didn't want to talk to him anymore.

"Okay," Shane said. He didn't want to let her go. He didn't know the next time he would get the chance to hear her voice. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight," Yuna said, before hanging up.

Normally, they would end a call by exchanging *i love you*'s. But that interaction was strictly business. She was his manager now and nothing more. What if she never got over it, Shane wondered. What if she decided she didn't want to be in his life anymore, and he had to choose her or Ilya?

Ilya appeared in the doorway of the bathroom with his hair wet and a towel around his waist. "Are you coming?"

Shane took one look at him and burst into tears, covering his face in his hands to muffle his cries.

"She hates me," Shane bawled.

Ilya sat down on the bed and put his hand on Shane's arm.

"She doesn't hate you, sweetheart," Ilya assured him. "No one who knows you could ever hate you."

"She does," Shane confirmed. "She doesn't love me anymore... Because of you."

"Because of me," Ilya asked.

"Yes," Shane confirmed. "That's what she said today after you left. She told me that she doesn't want to-" Shane's words were overtaken by his tears. "As long as we're together, she doesn't want anything to do with me."

"I'm sure she didn't say that," Ilya said, as if he was present for their conversation.

"How would you know," Shane snapped. "You don't know my mother. You don't know what she said."

"Did she say those exact words," Ilya asked gently.

No, she didn't. But it's what she meant.

"She said that you brainwashed me," Shane told him. "That you put ideas in my head and then I'm just going along with whatever you want me to do. That it's not what I really want."

Ilya nodded, taking it all in. "Is she right?"

What the fuck?

"Of course not," Shane said indignantly. "She just doesn't understand, and she doesn't want to try to understand. She thinks I'm too young and that I'm going to change my mind."

Ilya spoke neutrally. "What if that's true," he asked. "You might change your mind. And then are you going to hate me for the rest of your life for letting you do this?"

"No," Shane said, unsure of whether that was actually the truth.

"You are nineteen," Ilya said factually. "You are still young. You shouldn't be making any big life decisions yet."

"Is this your way of trying to break up with me again?"

"No," Ilya said genuinely. "I just want you to be sure of what you want."

"Of course I'm sure."

"How are you sure," Ilya asked. "I was the first man you've been with. I don't want you to miss out on anything. I would understand if you wanted more."

"I don't want anyone else," Shane said firmly. "I tried and I hated it."

"That was one person," Ilya said.

"So?"

"So, you're still young. You have no idea what you really want out of life," Ilya said.

Shane was exasperated. "Then why are you fucking me? If I'm so young and I don't know what I want, then why did you let this happen?"

Ilya's mouth hung open.

"I never understood why you chose me," Shane said, being vulnerable. "What was it about me?"

"You chose me," Ilya maintained. "You sought me out."

"No," Shane disagreed. "This started long before that day in your office and you know it. You always treated me differently than everyone else. You were always looking at me and..."

"And what," Ilya asked, daring him to say it.

"You flirted with me first," Shane said, putting it out there for discussion. "You were flirting with me. You wanted me. And you must have known that I knew the rumours about you being with students, because everyone knows the rumours."

Shane looked down. "So why did you choose me?"

"Because..." Ilya stewed. "You really want to know why?"

Shane couldn't be sure if he really *wanted* to hear this, but he *needed* to know.

He took a beat before agreeing. "Yes, tell me the truth."

Shane lifted his face and Ilya looked directly at him while he gave his explanation. "I chose you because I could tell that you needed it," he said harshly. "I knew you were an athlete, I knew you had a crush on me... and I thought that I maybe I could help you figure yourself out. I thought I could make your life better but I've only made it worse."

"You haven't made it worse," Shane said unconvincingly.

Ilya couldn't help but laugh derisively. "You just told me that I destroyed your family."

"I didn't say that *you* destroyed it," Shane clarified. "I destroyed it by choosing to be with you."

"What's the difference?"

There wasn't a real difference.

"Shane, I'm a bad person," Ilya said, angrily. "When are you going to get that through your head? Stop believing that I'm good. Stop telling me that you love me. Stop making excuses for me. Just stop. All I have ever done is hurt you. Don't you see that? From the day I met you, I have hurt you over and over again. And now you're sitting here, begging me to hurt you even more? What's wrong with you?"

His words made Shane's blood run cold. Maybe there was something wrong with him for him to keep coming back to Ilya no matter how badly he was treated.

"I'm not saying that you're good," Shane said savagely. "I'm saying that I don't care if you're good." He paused, perhaps realizing how disturbing that sentiment was. "I love you anyway. Even if you're a bad person. Who cares?"

"I care," Ilya said. "I don't deserve you, Shane."

"Stop putting me on a pedestal," Shane shouted. Any sadness inside him had turned to rage. "You always do that. Telling me that I'm perfect all the time. I'm not fucking perfect. I hate people telling me that I'm perfect. I'm fucked. My head is fucked."

Ilya's eyes stayed locked on him.

"You didn't do anything to me that I didn't want to happen," Shane told him conclusively. "Don't you fucking dare turn this into some kind of bullshit narrative where you took advantage of me. I asked for this. You said it yourself, I pursued you. I chose you. I could

have chosen to be with any other guy, but I didn't want to. I never wanted any of them. I only wanted you."

Ilya scanned Shane's face for evidence of sincerity.

"I knew you were older and I knew you were married. I knew it was wrong, and I did it anyway, because I didn't care. I didn't care about your wife, I didn't care how many people it would hurt, all I knew was that I wanted you."

Shane's chest heaved. He wiped a bead of snot from the tip of his nose.

"So if you're a bad person then so am I," Shane declared.

"You only think that because I made you think that," Ilya explained. "This is your first time doing something like this. I have done this many times. It's different."

Shane almost couldn't bring himself to say what he was thinking.

"The difference is that you love me," Shane argued. "That's the difference. You love me."

Ilya shook his head. "This is who I am," he said, shamefully. "Svetlana accepts it. She knows exactly who I've always been. But you don't," Ilya observed. "You need me to be better, and you deserve that. But I can't change. Not for you, not for anyone."

"Why not," Shane asked. "If you want to change, then change. Stop with this self-deprecating bullshit, and just be real with yourself for two fucking seconds."

Even when they were fighting, Shane could never hate Ilya. He loved him so fucking much it hurt. He wanted to close the gap between their mouths and kiss him. He wanted to sit on his lap and hold him and make love to him.

"I'll help you," Shane said. "We'll help each other. Just say yes. Say you'll be with me. Say you'll love me. Just say you'll try. That's all I'm asking."

Ilya reached out to touch him. His hand landed on Shane's bicep.

"Okay," Ilya agreed.

"Okay?"

"Yes, okay," Ilya shrugged. "If you think that you can change me, then I'll try."

"That's it," Shane asked. "You'll try?"

"I'm not promising anything," Ilya hedged. "I'm not saying that it'll work. But I can try."

Shane had never been more scared in his life. It was finally real. They were really going to do this.

"So you want me to live here?"

Ilya nodded. "Yes," he agreed. "But that doesn't mean that it'll work. You might hate it."

"I won't," Shane assured him. He was imagining all the furniture he was going to buy to make this place his own.

"Think of this as a trial run," Ilya said, trying to manage Shane's expectations. "Then we can decide later if we want it to be permanent."

Shane was too excited to listen to Ilya's list of conditions.

"I can't wait," Shane told him. "I'm going to make you so happy. I'll be the best boyfriend."

"You already are."

Ilya grabbed Shane's shoulder and pulled him into a kiss. Shane pulled away.

"I'm going to text Rose," Shane said, picking up his phone. He was smiling so big his cheeks hurt. "She's going to be happy for us."

Ilya smirked. "Do you not want to shower first?"

"Oh right." Shane had forgotten about the shower. He put his hand on top of Ilya's. "Lead the way."

Chapter End Notes

the end of this chapter has been pre-written for a while, but reading it again still made me weirdly emotional

again to assure everyone, svetlana and ilya will get eventually divorced so don't worry lol

i think that i need to actually sit down and actually sketch out my plans for the rest of the story. if you have anything you really want to see let me know in the comments because i love hearing suggestions!!!

i'm so grateful to have a positive comments section on this story. sometimes i see negative comments in other people's fics and it makes me so annoyed. it honestly makes me glad this story isn't more popular because i don't think i could handle rude people. so thank you guys for keeping it kind! love youuu 

Chapter 38: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

i lost a few subscribers last chapter and idk if it's because people don't like the direction of the story, but oh well, i'm gonna keep going for the people who do like it!

we're nearing the end of shane's time in college and hollanov are officially living together! what could go wrong (*wink*)? there will be some more obstacles but i promise nothing bad happens in this chapter! i just wanted to let hollanov be cute and domestic :)

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

Ilya set down a brown cardboard box filled with Shane's things on the hardwood floor.

"Be careful," Shane instructed from the doorway.

"I am being careful," Ilya promised, appearing slightly insulted.

Shane brought in the final box and stacked it on top of another larger box. There was so much clutter in Ilya's apartment now.

Their apartment. Shane kept having to remind himself that it was *his* apartment too.

"Is that everything," Ilya asked, shocked by the small amount of things Shane took with him. "Are we done already?" It was only eleven o'clock and they had already unloaded everything in Shane's car.

Shane took one last survey of his possessions to make sure he hadn't lost anything in the move.

“Yeah, I don’t have a lot of stuff. I’ve been living in a dorm for the past eight months,” Shane reminded him. “I want to start fresh, anyway.”

Starting fresh was a concept that very much appealed to Shane.

“You can do whatever you want, my love,” Ilya said, making Shane’s heart flutter. “Make the place your own.”

Shane smiled at that. Ilya’s apartment was spacious and had nice windows and a view, but it wasn’t very comfortable or inviting because Ilya had never truly lived there before. Shane was excited to make it a real home for both of them.

“Good, because I have *many* ideas.”

“Of course you would,” Ilya said, admiringly.

He had one major change that needed to happen sooner rather than later.

“I want a new bed,” Shane announced.

Ilya’s eyes narrowed. “Do we need a new bed?”

Shane nodded. “If this is going to be where we live together, then you can’t have the memories of other people you’ve had sex with in that bed.”

It would be like living with the ghosts of all of Ilya’s past hookups.

“I didn’t realize that bothered you,” Ilya said, nonchalant.

Of course it bothered him.

“It doesn’t,” Shane said, before backtracking slightly. “It *didn’t*, until now.”

Ilya looked a bit guilty.

“We should probably get rid of the couch then,” Ilya said, partially in jest.

“Great because I hate that thing anyway,” Shane said.

"You hate it," Ilya asked, like it was news to him.

"It's ugly," Shane said, taunting him.

Ilya smirked and then shoved Shane down onto the couch and began kissing him.

"We can still use it for now," Ilya decided.

“Hey,” Shane protested, hitting Ilya’s arm. “We have to unpack. If we don’t do it now, it’s never going to get done.”

“I promise to do it later,” Ilya said. He held his hand over his heart. “Swear on my life.”

Shane didn't believe him, but he was also too happy to care. He kissed him back, talking every time their lips parted. "Can you believe we're really doing this? Being together for

real?"

Ilya didn't answer. Instead he dropped to his knees on the carpet, and Shane quickly realized that the carpet wasn't there the last time he was here.

"You bought a rug for the living room?"

Ilya smiled proudly, resting his head against Shane's thigh and looking up at him.

"You like it?"

"Yeah," Shane said, surprised. "I love it. It really brings the room together."

Ilya eyes crinkled, clearly pleased with Shane's response. "You're so easy to please," he teased.

Shane tugged his shorts off before Ilya could do it for him. He let his head fall against the back of the couch as he felt the weight of Ilya's mouth enveloping him.

He could already tell that he was really going to enjoy this whole living together thing.

Shane had walked out of his Kinesiology final earlier that day feeling confident about his efforts. Even though he was leaving this institution in just over a week, he was still committed to finishing out the semester on a high note, and that meant performing well on all his exams just to prove to himself that he could.

He had reluctantly agreed to accompany Rose and Lily to a party for one last hurrah before disappearing from campus forever. He couldn't say he was looking forward to it. Shane hadn't felt entirely comfortable at parties for a while now.

"I can't believe you're actually leaving us," Rose told him sadly, taking Lily's hand for support. "It's the end of an era."

It really was bittersweet leaving his friends behind. But this was the best thing for Shane's future. He had outgrown the college environment. It was stifling him, and even though it had only lasted a few months, he had experienced a lot of unnecessary pain. He needed more out of life. He deserved it.

"I'm not leaving you guys," Shane rationalized. "I'm still in Montreal. We can still hang out all the time."

"I'm going to be at all your games," Rose declared. "I'm expecting season tickets. And seats where we can actually see the ice."

Shane smiled. "I'll see what I can do," he promised. "And why don't you guys come by the apartment sometime," Shane suggested.

Rose and Lily exchanged a knowing look in that secret language of theirs.

"You mean Rozanov's apartment," Lily asked, like it was still some big secret.

"It's our apartment now," Shane said with a shrug. He knew that this whole situation was strange and offputting to most people

Rose stole a glance at the exit. "Shane, are you sure you want to do this?"

Not you too, Shane thought. Rose was the one person who had never made him feel awkward about his relationship.

“You don’t have to rush into anything,” Lily said, softening the blow.

“You guys sound like Yuna.”

“Well, maybe she’s right,” Rose suggested. “She just wants what’s best for you.”

Before Shane could tell Rose why she was totally mistaken about Ilya and this was the best decision he'd ever made in his life, he felt a hand on the back of his shoulder and turned around.

“Troy,” Shane said, confused. Troy Barrett was standing in front of him, with his signature floppy hair and his soft brown eyes. His pupils had overtaken his irises and his cheeks were mildly pink. Maybe he needed some liquid courage before attempting to approach him. The last time they were in the same room was when Shane screamed at him. Shane couldn't clearly recall his motivations at the time, since Troy was one of the only guys who actually stood up for him.

“Hey Hollander,” Troy said, sheepishly. “Can we talk?”

Shane was tempted to say no and send him away. A more vengeful part of him was tempted to call Troy out in front of everyone again and leave him humiliated. But he also wanted to hear what he had to say for himself.

He followed Troy into the corner of the room where they could talk more privately.

“What do you have to say to me,” Shane asked, straight-forwardly.

"I wanted to apologize," Troy said. There was no lead-in, no preface, no explanations or justifications. It wasn't even clear what exactly he was apologizing for, which is a basic component of any decent apology. Was he apologizing for being friends with a homophobe, for being friends with a rapist, generally just being an asshole? Take your pick.

"Apologize for what," Shane pressed him.

"Everything." That was even more vague. It certainly wasn't an apology worthy of accepting.

"I don't want your apology," Shane said harshly.

Why doesn't he apologize to all the women his friend hurt?

Troy's shoulders slumped. "I didn't know anything about that stuff."

That stuff. He still didn't seem to understand.

Shane was beginning to feel the effects of the alcohol in his system, and he was in a blunt mood. This might be his last chance to give Troy a piece of his mind.

"Why do you care if I like you," Shane asked, rudely. "The season's over. I'm going to be leaving this place soon enough. Next year you'll have a new captain and you can make a better impression on him. So why do you care what I think anymore?"

Troy started swaying and looked like he was about to fall over. He was drunk.

"Are you okay," Shane asked with growing concern.

“Yeah,” Troy brushed him off. “I was just nervous to talk to you.” He rubbed the back of his neck and kept his eyes fixed at something beyond Shane's shoulder. “I'm always nervous to talk to you.”

Why would he be nervous to talk to me?

That's when Shane noticed Troy staring at his lips.

Oh. Ohhhh.

“Troy,” Shane said, snapping him out of his daze. “I have a boyfriend.”

Shane couldn't tell if Troy was red because of the tequila or the embarrassment.

“Is it serious,” he asked stiffly.

Was he honestly asking him that right now? Did he actually think... Shane couldn't even let himself finish that thought.

“Yes, it's serious,” Shane confirmed. “We live together.”

Troy looked like a poor rejected puppy.

“Are you sure you're okay,” Shane asked, feeling sorry for him.

“Yeah, I'm fine,” Troy said, clearly not fine. “I just need some water or something.”

“I can get you some water,” Shane offered.

“No,” Troy declined. “I wanted to tell you I was sorry, and I did. So, I think I’m going to go home now. See you around, I guess... Or not.”

Did he only come here because it was his last opportunity to see Shane? That was kind of pathetic, and made Shane feel even worse.

Troy turned to leave. “Wait,” Shane said, beckoning him back over. Troy went still. He seemed afraid of what Shane was going to say.

“I believe you,” Shane told him. Troy locked eyes with him and nodded, and then continued walking away.

Shane didn’t know what to make of that interaction. Was Troy being honest with him? He shouldn’t dwell on it, since he would probably never know for sure.

He rejoined Rose and Lily on the other side of the room.

“What was that all about,” Rose asked, concerned.

Shane was almost too stunned to speak “He wanted to apologize to me,” he told her.

“For what,” Rose asked.

“I’m not-I don’t really know.”

Rose scrunched up her nose. “I still don’t like him.”

Shane wasn't sure how he felt about Troy anymore. It was possible that Troy really didn't know about the truth about Dallas. And just from their conversation, it was clear that Troy he had some issues he was still working out, like his sexuality, for one. Maybe Shane shouldn't have been so hard on him before.

"Troy's not a bad guy," Shane defended someone that he wasn't yet sure was worth defending. "He's just a..." he couldn't think of the right adjective.

"Just a guy," Rose suggested.

"Yeah," Shane agreed. "He's just a guy."

Lily interrupted them, took Rose and Shane's hands and dragged them both over to the photo booth to take some cheesy photographs to remember their freshman experience.

As much as he wanted to stay out and dance the night away with Rose and Lily, Shane was eager to retire back to his new home and crawl in bed with his boyfriend.

They had gone outside for Lily to take a smoke break, when Shane decided to gracefully make his exit.

"I'm gonna head home," Shane announced. He should have predicted that Rose was not going to let him walk away so easily.

"No stay," Rose begged, tugging on Shane's sweater. "It's our last night together."

"I'm tired," Shane said. "I need sleep. We'll have more nights like this."

Shane knew that what he was saying wasn't the truth. Sure, they would still see each other and spend time together, but they wouldn't spend hours hanging off the side of Rose's bed and talking or listening to music or helping her run lines. They wouldn't be this young or at this crazy strange moment in their lives ever again. It just wouldn't be the same. Shane was going to miss out on so much. But hopefully the future he was headed towards would be so much more fulfilling than whatever he was going to be giving up.

And obviously he was feeling the nostalgia creep in because it was over. He was remembering things as better than they actually were in reality. He had to keep telling himself that his time at university had been objectively horrible. He'd let so many people down. His coach hated him. Most of his teammates hated him. Even the Dean hated him.

Aside from a few positive moments, Shane wished that he could erase a reasonable amount of the past few months from his memory forever.

"No we won't," Rose said tearfully. "It'll be different. I don't want you to leave."

"Rose," Lily said sympathetically. "It's going to be fine."

"No it's not," Rose fought with her. "You can't leave," she said to Shane. "I know that this last semester sucked, but you don't have to leave."

"Yes I do," Shane told her, being as gentle as he could. "I just don't feel like this is where I'm supposed to be anymore."

Rose pulled Shane into a hug and sounded like she was going to cry.

"Goodbye forever," she said dramatically.

"Don't do that," Shane told her softly. "I'm not leaving forever. I'll see you in a few days."

Rose pulled back. "I know," she said, sniffing. "I don't know why I'm getting so emotional."

Lily rubbed Rose's arm. "Because you're drunk."

Rose laughed wetly. "Yeah probably."

Lily turned to Shane, not quite as emotional as Rose was, but still sad.

"Bye Lily," Shane said.

"Come here," Lily said, embracing him. "Don't be a stranger." She patted him on the back.

"I won't," Shane promised. He looked directly at Rose. "I'm not going anywhere. I'm always just a phone call away."

She nodded. "I'm gonna miss you," she said. "You're like my best friend."

Now Shane was holding back tears. "You're mine too," he agreed. "You're like my sister."

"Well I already have three brothers," she said, shrugging. "But I like you more than all of them."

Shane collected himself as much as possible. "I'm gonna leave before this gets any harder than it already is. I'll call you tomorrow," he promised.

"You better," Rose said. "You can't get rid of me that easily. I'll stalk you."

“I will,” he promised.

She and Lily both waved as Shane walked away. When he looked back a few seconds later, they were already inside the house again.

Shane left the party shortly before midnight. He got home close to twelve-fifteen and used his key to open the door to Ilya's - *his and Ilya's* - apartment. Once he stepped inside, he immediately noticed the dim lighting.

He quickly rid himself of his sweater, placed it carefully on a hanger in the closet, and then turned the corner to see Ilya with a lighter in his hand, hovering over a candle. He was lighting the candles that were spread out on the kitchen table.

Ilya turned to look at him, acting like he had been caught. “I thought you wouldn't be home for another hour.”

The truth was that Shane came home early because he missed Ilya and he didn't want to waste any of their precious time together.

“What is all this,” Shane asked.

"Dinner," Ilya said simply.

"It's the middle of the night," Shane said, still confused and a little tipsy.

Ilya shrugged. "I wanted to cook for you. Are you hungry?"

Happy tears appeared at the surface of Shane's eyes. He couldn't believe Ilya made dinner for him. It was so thoughtful. No one he dated had ever done anything like this for him before. How could anyone question how much Ilya cared for him? If only they could see him right now.

"Sit down," Ilya directed him.

Shane walked over to the left side of the table where Ilya stood, and Ilya pulled out his chair for him. Shane sat down, and Ilya bent down from behind him and kissed him on the cheek.

Ilya doled out six small broiled potatoes onto Shane's plate, followed by some green beans.

"I can pull out my own chair," Shane said, smiling.

"You *could*," Ilya agreed, sitting down across from him.

"And get my own food."

Ilya exhaled. "Tell me about your day," he requested, taking a sip of wine.

Shane thought about where to start. "It was pretty uneventful," Shane said.

"How was the party?"

"It was good to see everyone," Shane told him, leaving out the part about how he was possibly being hit on. "But the entire time I couldn't wait to come home and be with you."

"Of course," Ilya said, teasingly.

"How was your-" Shane paused when he heard the egg timer go off.

"The pot roast," Ilya informed him, standing from his chair and walking over to the oven. "I'll be right back."

"There's more," Shane asked, feeling overwhelmed. "Ilya, it's too much."

"Nonsense," he said, slipping on his oven mitts.

They settled into their dinner, drinking and laughing and having probably the best time they had ever had together, until Shane noticed they had run out of wine and decided to get a second bottle. He uncorked it, poured his glass a quarter of the way full and set the bottle down on the table loudly, nearly knocking over one of the candles and setting the tablecloth on fire.

"I think that's enough," Ilya asserted.

"You're not the boss of me," Shane told him, lightheartedly.

"I'm not," Ilya asked, eyebrows raised.

Shane stared at him, finished the rest of his drink, and announced, "I think I'm done with eating now."

Shane crossed the table, took a seat on Ilya's left thigh, wrapping his right arm around him and caressed his hair. He stuck Ilya's fork into a potato and brought it to Ilya's lips. He drove the fork into Ilya's mouth and Ilya took the potato from the fork with his teeth and began chewing.

Shane watched him intently, studying his expression.

“Is it good,” Shane asked after a moment.

Ilya ran his hand up and down Shane’s back, unintentionally - or maybe intentionally - tickling him.

“Yes,” Ilya answered. “But I can feed myself, love.”

“You *could*,” Shane echoed Ilya’s earlier statement. “But why should you have to when I’m here?”

He put the fork back down on Ilya’s plate and wrapped his other leg around him so that he was straddling him on the chair. He rested his head on Ilya’s shoulder.

“I love you,” Shane said, beginning to place wet messy kisses all over his neck.

Ilya laughed joyfully. “Where is all this coming from, hmmm?”

Was it wrong to want to be close to the person you’re in love with?

“You did something nice for me,” Shane explained, scooting back slightly and reaching for Ilya’s belt. “So I wanted to do something nice for you too.”

“Sweetheart, our dinner will get cold,” Ilya whispered in Shane’s ear.

“Don’t care,” Shane whined. “Just want you. Wanna make you feel good.”

“There’s plenty of time for that later.”

It was true. They had the rest of tonight and tomorrow morning too, but Shane couldn’t wait. He wanted *later* to start now.

Shane palmed Ilya’s erection from the outside of his pants. “You’re so hard,” Shane observed. Ilya didn’t resist when Shane unbuckled his belt, unzipped his zipper and shoved his hand inside his boxers.

He responded immediately to Shane’s touch, hardening even further in Shane’s grip. Shane kissed him sloppily, tasting the wine that he and Ilya had consumed. They stayed in that position, Shane stroking him roughly as the pleasure began to overtake him. Arousal simmered deep in Shane’s belly every time Ilya tried to thrust up into his hand. Occasionally Ilya moaned into Shane’s mouth and he felt the vibrations on his tongue.

“Wait stop,” Ilya said suddenly.

Shane stopped moving and pulled away. “What’s wrong?”

“I’m going to come.”

That was the whole point of the handjob.

Shane leaned in to kiss him again. “That’s a good thing.”

“No, I don’t want to come yet.”

Shane wrapped his arms around Ilya’s back and clung to him.

“Then take me to bed,” Shane ordered.

Ilya stood up from the chair, holding Shane and carrying him to the bedroom in a state of pure urgency. He deposited him on the bed and climbed on top of him. Shane quickly undressed and turned over on his side.

“Hurry,” Shane said impatiently.

Ilya positioned himself behind him and placed his hand on his hip.

“Okay,” he asked.

”Yes, yes,” Shane repeated the words in close succession. “Just need you. Please. Hurry.”

Ilya got to work with his fingers, slipping one finger inside of Shane and making him claw at the sheets. “More, need more, please I can take it,” Shane begged. Ilya kissed Shane’s neck as he added another finger and started scissoring. Shane melted into Ilya’s kisses. When he felt his whole body begin to relax, he knew he was ready. He reached back for Ilya’s arm. “Now,” he commanded. "Do it now."

Ilya knew how ready Shane was and he wasn't going to tease him or draw it out. Shane listened as Ilya got himself ready, lathering himself in lube and then felt the pressure as he slowly pushed inside.

“Love you,” Shane said once Ilya was fully inside him. "Move, please move." Ilya complied with his demand. Thirty seconds later, he was coming apart, spilling onto the bedsheets. Ilya followed closely behind, his come landing on the dimples of Shane’s lower back.

Once their breathing had returned to normal and they were mostly clean again, Shane folded himself into Ilya's arms and nuzzled his chest.

"Can we do that every night," Shane asked, stone-cold serious. Ilya reached down and held his cheek.

"I don't see why not," Ilya agreed.

"I can't believe you made me dinner," Shane said, still astonished that any part of this was real.

Ilya kissed the top of his head and the screen faded to black.

Chapter End Notes

random note: i am so bad at coming up with names that I realized that I reused Jessica multiple times!! both Shane and ilya have ex-girlfriends named Jessica. that's confusing! lol. i guess i could go back and change one of their names to Jennifer or something, but i also think it's kind of funnier this way.

ily guys chat with me in the comments if you'd like 

Chapter 39: Svetlana

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there are currently 570 of you subscribed!! that could easily change because i keep losing subscribers lately (thank you to the people who are still here, ily!)

i am svetlana's number one fan! this chapter was emotionally tough to write and it genuinely feels like it's an entirely different story. if you liked the last svetlana chapter than you will probably enjoy this one too (i hope?) and if not then i'm sorry lol maybe the next one will be better.

hopefully you guys like it :)

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

Svetlana was determined to save her crumbling marriage.

She wasn't entirely sure if this version of her marriage was worth saving, but she also knew in her bones that she wasn't willing to give up on it yet. She had made a commitment all those years ago and that meant something, even if everyone around her was constantly devaluing it because of the fact that she and her husband happened to have sex with other people sometimes. Her relationship was important to her, regardless of what anyone else thought. She was a good wife.

It didn't start out this way. There was a time, many years ago, when they were hopelessly in love with each other. Back then, Svetlana wouldn't have even thought about looking at other people. But Svetlana made the mistake of leaving the door cracked, and eventually a strong wind blew on the hinges and it swung wide open.

Their arrangement had evolved several times over the years, and every time it did they would always lie to each other and pretend that it was the final iteration. Svetlana was acutely aware that there was the potential for it to morph into something new again now that Shane was in the picture.

Some may say that you can't build a healthy relationship on a broken foundation, but it had been working for Ilya and Svetlana up until this point. What started out as blatant cheating and lying, had turned into something resembling honesty and loyalty. Svetlana couldn't be sure of the first time Ilya stepped out on her. She suspected it was in the early months of their engagement. Something about the word "marriage" spooked him, like many men. She put up with it, naively believing that getting married would mean that the cheating would stop.

It never did.

But something in their relationship did change: Svetlana grew tired of letting her husband be the only one having any of the benefits of singlehood. She refused to let herself be kept locked away like a good little wife while he was allowed to run around town like he didn't have a wife waiting for him at home. She wasn't going to make that sacrifice unless he was willing to make the same sacrifices for her.

She tried to stop a hundred times. She vowed that she was never going to do it again after giving a blowjob to the cute man at the bar whose smile reminded her of her husband. But then the next weekend she ended up going home with a woman whose name she barely remembered because, why not? There was nothing preventing her from indulging in whatever she wanted at the end of the night. She didn't have anyone waiting for her, calling her wondering where she was, if she was okay, if she was even happy.

She promised herself that one day it would just be the two of them. That she alone would finally be enough. But then they would meet someone new and interesting and it felt small-minded to ignore those feelings just because they were married.

At first, they'd agreed that they would only have sex with someone else if they were doing it together. That rule felt safe. Neither one of them could develop feelings for the other person if they were never alone with them. The threesome rule lasted less than six months. It was too much work finding people that would be willing to have sex with a married couple, and the ones who were eager to engage in that kind of sexual arrangement always seemed a bit off.

That's when they graduated to the condition that they could only have sex with other people when one of them was out of town. That lasted even less time, maybe closer to three months. Then came the era of "don't ask, don't tell," which was the worst of them all. It made them feel like they had to keep secrets from each other and only made them more resentful.

Svetlana knew that it didn't make sense to most people, but this is what worked for their relationship. It *had* worked, until now. Lately Svetlana had been questioning everything. She wondered if this was her life and nothing ever changed, would she be able to accept it? If this was all there was, and there was no hope of it ever getting better.

What if Ilya didn't love her anymore? Would that be the worst thing? She could rebuild. She was still young enough to start over. What stopped her from leaving was that gnawing voice in the back of her mind that told her that this was the best she was ever going to have. She was more afraid to lose what she had accumulated over the past decade than she was desperate for a more fulfilling life.

Her life with Ilya was good enough, and that's all she really needed anyway. Good enough.

It had not been the greatest of months for Svetlana. Her husband's extracurricular sex life was being even more of a nuisance than usual. And to top it all off, her period was five days late. She finally got it this morning. Clearly the stress of this situation was taking a toll on her body. If she had been pregnant, it wouldn't be the end of the world.

That was a lie. It would probably be the end of the world, and it would definitely be the end of her relationship.

Svetlana was snapped out of her thoughts when she heard her name being called from outside the door.

"Professor Vetrova," the voice called.

Only a student would address her that way. She glanced up from her desk and saw a freshman student from her Sociology class.

Her office hours weren't until tomorrow, but sometimes students would pop by and see if she was there to answer last-minute questions during the exam period. She tried to make herself available as much as she could.

“Rose,” she acknowledged her presence. “Are you here to discuss the exam, because I only have a few minutes. I’ll have my regular office hours tomorrow afternoon.”

Rose kept standing in the doorway, like she was waiting to be invited inside.

“No, it’s something else,” Rose said, picking at the frayed edge of her sweater sleeve.

Please god, don’t let this be about Ilya. This was one of *her* students. If he had sex with this girl, Svetlana was going to have a conniption.

“Come in and sit down,” Svetlana told her, trying her best to remain calm. Rose had done nothing to earn Svetlana’s anger.

Rose carefully took a seat across from Svetlana. Svetlana could already tell this was not going to be a pleasant conversation.

“I wanted to have a talk with you, woman to woman,” Rose said.

Svetlana cracked a tiny smile and laughed dryly. “Woman to woman?”

“Yes,” Rose said, sitting up straighter.

Svetlana began imagining exactly how she was going to punish Ilya for putting her in this position. She always dreaded these conversations. The way she had to tiptoe around her own complicity.

“If my husband...” Svetlana chose her words carefully. “If he made you feel uncomfortable somehow, you can tell me. You didn’t do anything wrong.”

Rose looked horrified, and Svetlana assumed that she must have struck a nerve.

“I understand that this can feel awkward,” Svetlana recognized, following a similar script to the other confrontations she had with Ilya’s previous girlfriends. “But you don’t have to be nervous. Whatever you want to say will stay between us. I won’t share anything you tell me with him.”

Rose quickly shut down Svetlana’s assumptions. “That’s not why I’m here,” Rose assured her. “I wanted to talk to you about Shane.”

Svetlana needed a minute to soak that in.

“Hollander,” Rose clarified.

“I know Shane,” Svetlana confirmed, bluntly. “What about him?”

“I’m worried about him.”

Ugh, this was an annoying interruption. “I know Shane and Ilya are having sex,” Svetlana assured her. “It’s okay, you don’t need to tell me that. I’ve known for a while.”

Rose nervously curled her fingers. “You know?”

“Of course,” Svetlana said.

"It's just..." Rose looked so awkward as she attempted to explain herself. "I don't think it's healthy for him," were the words Rose decided on.

Svetlana watched Rose, analyzing her, and thought about how difficult it must have been for her to come here and talk to her like this. She could at least hear her out. She was also understandably curious about what she had to say.

Svetlana shrugged her shoulders and reached under her desk to grab the booze. She wasn't prepared to have this conversation sober.

"I need a drink," Svetlana announced. "Should I get two glasses?"

Rose's eyes widened. "Sure," she said, fidgeting and glancing around the room.

Svetlana retrieved two glasses and a bottle of vodka that Ilya gave her for her birthday last year.

"You can relax," Svetlana said, sensing Rose's nervousness. "You're American right?"

"Yeah."

"Well here you can have a drink, it's legal."

"I know that," Rose said, mildly agitated. "I don't usually drink with my professors."

This wasn't a normal situation.

"I imagine you don't usually have discussions like this with your other professors," Svetlana pointed out.

“This is definitely a first,” Rose agreed.

Svetlana filled Rose’s glass with vodka and slid it across the other side of the desk.

Rose took a swig and grimaced. “Is this lighter fluid?”

“Just drink it,” Svetlana encouraged. “It will make this conversation easier if we’re both a bit drunk.”

Rose complied, emptying what was left in her glass and putting it down on the desk for another round. Svetlana filled it again and then refilled her own.

Svetlana slouched back in her chair. “Now tell me what it is that you came here to say.”

Rose swallowed nervously. “He would kill me if he knew I was talking to you right now.”

“So why are you here?”

“Because I think he’s making a mistake,” Rose said candidly. “His mom called me the other day crying. She’s freaked out. She thinks he’s lost his mind or something.”

“Has he lost his mind,” Svetlana asked simply.

“Maybe,” Rose answered. “And I wanted to ask you, not to be rude or anything, but why are you letting him go through with this? The sex is one thing but this just seems like it’s gone too far.”

At that point in the conversation Svetlana was completely lost. She didn't appreciate the feeling of being blindsided. She should be the first person to know anything that affected her marriage.

"Letting him go through with what?"

Rose looked confused, like Svetlana should know the answer to her own question.

"They're moving in together," Rose divulged.

That couldn't be true. Ilya would have said something to her. And he wouldn't have to say anything, because he'd know that she would never allow it.

Svetlana was dismissive of Rose's concerns. "No they're not."

Rose tilted her head to one side. "Your husband didn't tell you? Must've slipped his mind somehow." When Svetlana went silent, Rose took it as a cue to keep going. "They're keeping it a secret from almost everyone. I just didn't realize that included you."

Svetlana was still processing this major piece of news.

"Why are you telling me this," Svetlana asked, bordering on antagonistic. "What do you want me to do about it?"

"Because I think you have a right to know," Rose answered. "And because I think they're moving way too fast, don't you? They shouldn't be *actually* dating at all. He's married to you. He needs to focus on his career, not being in a relationship with a married guy." Rose paused and threw in, "No offence," to take the edge off.

Why wouldn't he tell me?

This person sitting in front of her knew more about her marriage than she did, and that was a humiliation that Svetlana should not have had to bear.

“He’s a child,” Svetlana said, thinking out loud. She stared into her empty glass. No alcohol would be enough to numb her to the emotions she was feeling.

Rose spoke out of turn. “I think you should do something to stop it from happening.”

Svetlana glanced up at Rose with daggers in her eyes.

"What would you have me do," Svetlana asked sarcastically. "Chain my husband to the bed? I'm not his captor. I can't stop him from doing what he wants."

"You're his wife," Rose said, flabbergasted by what she was hearing. "You must have some kind of say in this."

Svetlana was sensing some judgment underlying Rose's concern for her friend.

"Do you have a problem with my relationship," she asked. "Speak freely. I hate when people don't say what they really mean."

Rose hardly needed permission to share her opinion. “No, I don’t have any issue with the open relationship, polyamory thing," she said boldly.

“Good,” Svetlana said.

“I mean it’s kind of played out,” Rose said, condescendingly. “But people can do whatever they want I guess.”

Svetlana raised an eyebrow. "I don't know what you mean."

Rose tapped her fingers against her glass.

"How is it any different from what men have always done," Rose asked, quizzically. "He's cheating on you, and you know that he is, but you choose to ignore it and pretend like you're happy. Isn't that how men have always treated their wives?"

Who the hell did this girl think she is? What gave her the right to speak to her that way? She knew nothing about her. Nothing about her marriage. Nothing about anything.

"I don't think it's that simple," Svetlana argued without realizing why she was arguing. Rose was nineteen, she had no idea what she was talking about. She had never been married. Her opinion on Svetlana's life was irrelevant.

"I don't understand how you put up with the disrespect," Rose said, brutal in her response.

Svetlana really did not appreciate this side of her. She turned the heat back on her. "Aren't you being just a little bit hypocritical?"

Rose was insulted. "How am I a hypocrite?"

"You pretend to be such a feminist, yet you were okay with your friend having sex with a married man up until now," Svetlana laid out her argument. "A man who is in a position of power over him, I should add. Is that supposed to be empowering?"

"I just want my friend to be happy," Rose said defensively.

“Then I guess we’re both hypocrites,” Svetlana casually replied. She realized that Rose’s glass wasn’t empty. “Drink up, there’s still some left and you should never waste good vodka.”

“What’s wrong with you,” Rose asked, seemingly disturbed by what she had witnessed today. “Seriously, why are you like this? Did he really mess with your head that much?”

Svetlana was growing tired of constantly being asked that question. It was uninspired and unoriginal. She didn’t blame Rose for believing that she was the spiteful wife. She had more than enough evidence to form that opinion of her. But Svetlana was much more than anyone's wife.

“Why don’t you tell me,” Svetlana offered her the floor. “Since according to you I’m just some dumb housewife who lets my husband walk all over me.”

“I’m sorry, I was wrong,” Rose conceded. “You clearly are just as bad as he is.”

Svetlana resented being compared to her husband. She was her own person, not an extension of him. She should be judged for her own flaws, not his.

“You asked what’s wrong with me,” Svetlana said pensively. “Maybe I just don’t care what other people think about me or how I choose to live my life. That’s always been a problem of mine. You walked in here thinking that if you insult me, if you find my weak points, that you can manipulate me into doing what you want. But I don’t have any weak points. I’m an open book. I don’t hide who I am. Everyone already knows.”

Svetlana put her hand on her knee before Rose could perceive how her leg was bouncing.

Rose stared at her for what felt like an unreasonable amount of time.

“Do you not think that you deserve better than to be married to a person who’s in love with someone else?”

Svetlana felt like she'd just been stabbed in the chest. It's not like she was blind to the truth, but hearing someone say it out loud still hurt her more than she cared to admit.

She tried to keep herself composed for the remainder of their discussion.

"They're not in love," Svetlana flatly denied, despite knowing that it was true.

"I've seen them together," Rose said. "I don't know your husband, but I know my friend, and Shane is in love."

Svetlana stewed in her anger. "Do you think you can hurt me by talking about my husband," she asked, fed up with being treated like some idiot trapped in a loveless marriage with a man who hated her. "I stopped allowing myself to be hurt by anything he did a long time ago."

Rose's face transformed into a mixture of loathing and sympathy.

"I'm sorry," Rose said sincerely. "I didn't realize."

Didn't realize what?

Rose leaned forward, placed her glass back on the desk and stood up to leave. She lingered at the door. "I hope you find whatever you're looking for one day."

Svetlana watched as Rose left her office, descending down the empty hallway, hearing the echo of her footsteps on the tile.

She felt like she couldn't breathe. She grabbed her keys off her desk and stood up quickly before remembering she was probably too inebriated to get behind the wheel. She sat back down and decided to come up with a plan.

She sat outside the apartment complex in her car for an hour waiting for Ilya to leave. His car was in the parking lot which meant he must still be there. The real question was whether Shane was in there with him.

She thought about storming inside and catching them in the act - for a second time - but her only goal today was to speak to Shane. She needed to get into his head and talk him out of this ridiculous notion of living with her husband. Not only because it was a terrible idea for everyone involved, but because it was the person it would hurt the most was simultaneously the person who deserved it the least. And if Shane was going to make such a rash decision, he needed to have all the information.

It had been a long time since she'd gone to Ilya's apartment. It was a matter of years, not months. She used to hate that he kept a second home after they were married. She presumed that the affairs were just an excuse. That the real reason he must have kept it was in case he ever wanted to leave her. He had one foot out the door the entire time they were together. But she didn't hate the extra apartment as much as she despised seeing a random woman's underwear in her bed or another woman's hair in her shower drain or used condoms in the garbage bin. And the option of hotel sex did seem kind of juvenile and lose its appeal rather quickly for Ilya, even though Svetlana still got a twisted thrill out of it.

She found the spare key under the welcome mat and twisted it into the lock. She stepped inside and instantly recognized that this was not the same apartment she'd walked into before. It felt lived-in. There were coats hanging from hangers. The kitchen housed a kettle and an assortment of coffee mugs and there was suddenly real food in the fridge.

As she moved deeper into the space, she found Shane napping soundly on the couch in the middle of the afternoon with a blanket tucked under his chin.

"Shane," she said loudly and rudely. "Wake up."

He slowly opened his eyes, seemingly calm, until he noticed Svetlana and she watched the panic rising in him.

“I thought I might find you here.”

He scrambled to sit up and moved himself to the other side of the couch so he could get further away from her.

“What are you doing here,” he asked, confused and angry.

“I was looking for you, actually,” she informed him. “Can I sit?”

Shane put his blanket over the empty seat. “No,” he said firmly. “You need to get the hell out.”

“That’s not going to happen,” she informed him. “If you want to act like an adult and live here with *my* husband, then you can have a conversation with me like an adult. You don’t get to run away. Not when you chose this.”

Shane cowered. “So I guess he must’ve told you that I’m going to live here.”

He was so young. She almost felt bad for him. She *did* feel bad for him.

“He tells me everything,” Svetlana lied. “We’re married. The question is why the hell are you doing this to yourself?”

She realized at that moment that Shane was studying her the same way she had been studying him.

“Do you have anything else to say to me,” she asked.

Shane was quiet for a moment. He seemed almost remorseful.

"I'm sorry," he told her.

"I wasn't looking for an apology."

"Then what do you want from me," Shane asked. "Why did you come here?"

Svetlana walked across the room so that she was standing directly in front of Shane behind the coffee table.

"I came here to warn you," she said, like she was doing him a favour. "I don't think you understand what you're doing. You think you can play house, living here with my husband in secret and playing your little hockey games. But that's not reality."

Shane took her comments on the chin.

"What happens when you want to invite your teammates over," Svetlana chipped away at Shane's unrealistic vision of their future together. "Or when the world wants to know who Shane Hollander is dating? What are you going to do then?"

Shane's gaze retreated.

"I'll figure it out," Shane said stubbornly.

Svetlana nearly descended into laughter. That was rich. Ilya had tricked this poor boy into thinking that he would ever be satisfied being faithful to one person. Svetlana, better than anyone, knew that was a lie.

“He’s my husband,” Svetlana told him firmly. “Not your boyfriend. There’s nothing about him that you know about that I didn’t know first.”

Shane sat there, holding back tears as she twisted the knife deeper in his gut.

"You don't know him like I do," Svetlana said. "This can only end badly for you."

"I think I know him pretty well."

“We’ve been together since we were fifteen,” she said, emphasizing their history. “You’ve known him for a couple months. We are not the same. You think he’s going to suddenly be faithful? He won’t. He’ll get bored of you in a year.”

“He loves me,” Shane said, only revealing to Svetlana how immature he was. But she had to give him credit, he was holding his ground.

“Is that what he told you,” Svetlana asked with a sadistic tone that seemed meticulously crafted to shatter Shane’s fragile heart.

“He tells me all the time,” Shane said.

Svetlana was being intentionally cruel and she knew that. But she also knew that she was doing what was best for Shane. It was something that her husband was clearly unwilling to do.

“He will never leave me. You know that don’t you? You’re not the first student I’ve had to have this conversation with, Shane. You’re not even the second.”

Shane was nineteen. Svetlana was only a few years older than him when she had gotten married. She didn’t understand at that time what it meant to bind your life to another person. She thought that it was a piece of paper. A formality that people do because it’s what’s

expected of them. She didn't realize that getting married meant that you would be judged by your spouse's failings and have to apologize for their actions as if they were your own.

Svetlana saw flashes of her younger self in Shane, perhaps more than in any of her husband's other lovers. Shane was highly intelligent, driven and destined for more than Ilya could offer him. She wouldn't let her husband's selfishness get in the way of his future. It wasn't right.

"I know you think that he loves you, but he doesn't," Svetlana said. "My husband sometimes gets distracted by shiny new things, but he also gets bored of them easily. And when he's done with you, he will throw you away and you will be left to pick up the pieces. And I don't want to see that happen to you. You're a good kid, Shane. He shouldn't have allowed you to get involved in any of this."

"Why are you doing this to me," Shane asked desperately.

"He did this to you," Svetlana corrected. "He took advantage of you."

"No," Shane flat-out denied what she was insinuating. "He loves me too. He does. You're just mad that he loves me more than he loves you."

Svetlana wondered if he was partially right.

"You might not see it clearly right now," Svetlana explained. "But one day, maybe when you're my age, you'll see things very differently. And then you'll be glad that we had this conversation."

Shane wasn't going for Svetlana's pitch. "Stop acting like you want to help me," Shane told her. "I don't need your help, I'm fine."

These self-righteous teenagers interfering in her marriage were going to drive her up a wall. Svetlana thanked her lucky stars that she wasn't pregnant right now. Kids ruin everything.

"I'm fine," Shane repeated.

"Really," Svetlana asked.

"Yes," Shane said, less convincingly.

"You have to know that this isn't going to work out," Svetlana told him.

Shane shrugged. "I don't know that. He told me that you guys aren't even really together," Shane said stubbornly. He probably didn't even realize how much those words would crush her.

Wow. Ilya really was a fucking asshole. A lying, manipulative dick.

"Is that what he told you?" Svetlana's tone implied the answer. "Because that's not true. We *are* married. Legally and in every other way. He's lying to you, Shane. He's been lying to you this entire time."

Shane was trying his hardest not to let his disappointment show.

"Don't let him take more from you than he already has," Svetlana said in an authoritative yet loving tone. "You have so much more to offer the world. Don't let him hide you away in this place."

Svetlana wasn't only saying these words to Shane, she was giving instructions to herself. She wished she could warn herself the day of her wedding that this is where she would end up. If she had known, there was no way she would have made it down the aisle.

He crossed his arms and spoke barely above a whisper. "Can you please leave now?"

Svetlana felt a strange maternal urge to try to comfort him. She snuffed it out, took one last look around the apartment and then left without saying another word.

Svetlana didn't say anything to Ilya about what she had done. She didn't tell him that she entered his apartment without permission or that she confronted Shane or that she was terrified that some day soon Ilya was going to sneak out of their bed in the middle of the night and never come back.

Three days after she infiltrated her husband's apartment, Svetlana was still bracing herself for Ilya to break the news to her that he wanted out of their marriage. She kept waiting and waiting for him to come out and say it, but he never did. They had dinner, watched television, made small talk about their respective days, and retired to bed without it ever coming up in conversation.

That particular evening, Ilya had come home in a good mood, which worried her. Was this the night he was going to tell her? Was he carrying around divorce papers in his bag, just waiting for the right moment to ask for her signature? Had he already found a lawyer? Was he going to let her keep the house? It was the least he could do after everything he'd put her through. Not to mention the humiliation of a divorce. Everyone would know that he was the one who chose to end things. And over a student no less. How could she ever show her face at the university ever again?

But there were no divorce papers. There was no awkward break up conversation. Rather, on that third night, Svetlana found herself naked underneath her husband, begging him to enter her.

Ilya reached into the side table.

“Do we need one,” Svetlana asked.

Ilya hesitated. That meant the answer was yes.

“I don’t know,” he said. “Maybe. Yes. Just to be safe.”

“When was the last time you got tested?”

“Umm,” Ilya tried to get enough blood flow to his brain to remember. “Three weeks ago?”

He said his answer like it was a question.

She nodded. “Yeah, okay. I mean if you want to use one.”

A short eight minutes later, Svetlana was lying on her stomach with her head resting on a pillow. Ilya was tracing circles along the soft skin of upper back.

“Are you feeling better,” Ilya asked.

Svetlana felt slightly better. Orgasms had a calming effect on her.

She didn’t give him the satisfaction of an answer.

“I went to your apartment a few days ago,” she revealed, seemingly out of nowhere. She felt Ilya’s hand stop moving and recoil. She turned over with a grunt. “Do you want to talk about why Shane is under the impression that he’s going to live in your apartment?”

Ilya had been caught, and they both knew it.

“I was going to tell you,” Ilya said, regretfully.

“Is that true,” Svetlana asked, not believing him for a single second.

“Yes.”

“When were you going to tell me?”

“I was going to tell you tonight.”

Svetlana’s heart sank. She knew Ilya was capable of a lot, but she never thought she would be on the receiving end of one of his manipulation. He never thought that he would use sex to manipulate her.

“You were going to wait until after we had sex to tell me that?”

Ilya averted his eyes. “I didn’t plan it that way,” he argued. “If that’s what you’re implying.”

“This is exactly what I’m implying,” Svetlana clarified. “You finally have sex with me for the first time in over a month, and it’s because you want something from me. You think you’re so smart, but I have always been smarter. You can’t trick me or manipulate me like you do with everyone else... Like you’re doing with him.”

Ilya took great offence to Svetlana’s insinuation.

“I’m not manipulating him,” Ilya maintained. “He made his choice.”

“Sometimes I wonder how I ever married a man who is so incapable of taking responsibility for anything,” Svetlana spat.

“How can I take responsibility for other people’s choices, Sveta?”

She hated him. She really did. She hated him so much.

Svetlana took this opportunity when they were already fighting to share something personal with him.

“What if I was pregnant,” she asked hypothetically, because it was thankfully still only theoretical. “Would you take responsibility for a baby you helped create?”

His nose twitched. “Are you pregnant?” He sounded angry at her.

“No,” she said. “I thought I could be for a second. But no, I’m not.”

“Okay,” Ilya said, unkindly. “Were you ever planning on telling me?”

“I don’t know,” Svetlana replied. “Maybe. Eventually. Were you ever really planning on telling me about Shane?”

“Yes,” Ilya said emphatically. She still didn't trust that he was being honest.

Svetlana stared at him with overflowing resentment.

"Why are you so upset," he asked thoughtlessly. "Do you want me to have a child with you?"

“No,” she said honestly. "Even if I was... I wouldn’t have wanted it anyway.”

There was something unsaid that hung in the space between them, daring them to say its name.

"I thought after last time," Ilya said cautiously, careful not to ignite her anger again. "Maybe you wouldn't want to do that again."

Svetlana hated bringing that up. "That was fifteen years ago," she said. "That was different."

Ilya didn't disagree. How could he? It wasn't his decision to begin with.

"Do you even want kids," Svetlana asked with genuine curiosity. "Because I didn't think you did."

Ilya sighed in a way that made Svetlana regret asking the question. "I don't know," he answered, sounding more uncertain than she had ever heard him be about the issue. "You knew my father, Sveta. I don't want to be like him."

"You've always been enough for me," Svetlana said, pathetically. She knew that she should have felt embarrassed by that statement. She realized how ridiculous that sounded considering the nature of their relationship. But she meant it nonetheless.

Her words caught in her throat. "I'm sorry I couldn't be enough for you."

No. This wasn't how it was going to happen. She wasn't going to let him have the power. Svetlana swallowed her pain and set out the new terms. *Her* terms, not his. She was his wife, and if she was going to stay then there were going to be rules. And Ilya wasn't the only one who got to have his cake and eat it too.

"If this is really what you want, fine," Svetlana said, pulling herself together. "But that means that I'm done being careful. I'm not going to think about your feelings anymore because you have never thought about mine. I'll be just as selfish as you are. I will do whatever I want,

and if it hurts you, too bad. If I fall in love with other people then so be it. You have no say over that part of my life. It won't belong to you anymore."

It was an empty threat because Ilya had clearly checked out of their marriage already.

"That part of you hasn't belonged to me in a long time," Ilya said, crushing her last shred of hope in salvaging their broken life.

He stood up off the bed and went into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him. Svetlana stared up at the ceiling and for the first time in ten years, considered quietly ending things. She unplugged her phone from the charger and typed into Google, "Best divorce attorneys in Montreal".

Chapter End Notes

that was devastating, poor sveta!!! get out of there girl!! run!!!

let me know your thoughts in the comments (as long as they are nice of course). ty again for the reassurance after the last chapter <3

love you guys okay byeee :)

Chapter 40: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

i'll keep this authors note short (like this chapter)

thank you all for continuing to read along. i appreciate you so much :)

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

Ilya splashed some cold water on his face and stared at his reflection in the mirror.

How could a night that started off so well deteriorate so quickly? They ate dinner, they laughed, they were genuinely happy. Why did it always have to end with yelling and slamming doors?

He shouldn't have lied to her. Lies by omission were still lies, and this one was huge. What he did to her was unforgivable. Svetlana had taken him back before. She'd forgiven terrible indiscretions. But this was by far the worst thing he'd ever done to her.

When Ilya walked out of the bathroom, Svetlana was laying on the bed with her phone in her hand and an analytical look on her face.

"I'm sorry," Ilya said with contrition. "I shouldn't have yelled at you. I didn't mean those things. I don't know why I'm like this. I don't want to be this person, but it's like I can't help it."

Svetlana stopped typing and turned to look at him. He had seen her disappointed before, but this was different. She used to look at him with love, but now it was like a switch had flipped in the last thirty seconds and any warmth she felt towards him was gone.

“I love you so much,” Ilya said, feeling a rush of emotions. He had never been more terrified. He had lost too many people in his life. He couldn’t lose her too. “I love you. I don’t want to lose you. You’re my best friend, Sveta. We can fix this.”

Svetlana’s eyes were cold. “You love me as a friend,” she said with no feeling behind it. “You don’t love me like a husband loves his wife. And honestly, I don’t think that you have ever really treated me like your wife.”

Ilya chose his words carefully so that he wouldn’t have to lie to her again.

“I’ll do anything,” Ilya promised. He had let her down so badly. He hated seeing her like this, but more than anything, he hated knowing that he was the cause of all her suffering.

“You would stop seeing him,” she asked bluntly.

Ilya’s heart snapped in two. “Is that what you want,” he asked. “Are you asking me to stop seeing him?”

Without answering her question, it appeared that Ilya had answered her question.

“No,” Svetlana said calmly. “I’m asking you for a divorce.”

Divorce.

The word felt foreign. It wasn’t something that Ilya ever thought was a real possibility for them. It was something that *other people* did. He and Svetlana always managed to make things work.

“I don’t want a divorce,” Ilya stated, as if he could unilaterally decide for both of them.

“That’s not how this works,” Svetlana told him. “I want a divorce, and you will give it to me. You don’t have a choice in this.”

“Yes I do,” Ilya argued, pointlessly. “I won’t let this happen.”

“You don’t even want this marriage, Ilya,” Svetlana yelled in desperation. “You don’t want me.”

What had he done to break this relationship beyond repair? He was evil. He was unforgivable. He didn’t deserve Svetlana. He didn’t deserve Shane. He didn’t deserve either of them. Everyone he loved, he eventually drove insane.

“You don’t want children with me,” Svetlana went down the list. “You don’t want to make love to me. You don’t even want to live with me. I’m doing this for you too, can’t you see that?”

“This is not for me, because I don’t want it,” Ilya said stubbornly. He just kept thinking about how he couldn’t lose her. He loved her too much to lose her. He needed her. This couldn’t be happening to him.

“If you love him, then you should be with him,” Svetlana said. “But at least be someone deserving of him. Be for him what you could never be for me.”

Ilya's mouth was struggling to catch up to his racing thoughts. Half of him was yelling at him to get down on his hands and knees and beg for her forgiveness, while the other half knew that she was right and it was time to finally move on.

“Where is this coming from,” he asked her.

“I hate this version of myself,” Svetlana told him, regretfully. “I hate who I am in this relationship. I hate being a person who sneaks around and lies all the time. I hate coming home to an empty house. I hate sleeping alone. I hate waiting for someone to come home

who clearly doesn't want to come home. I hate feeling like the other woman in my own marriage."

"You're not the other woman," Ilya denied.

"We both know that's not true," Svetlana rebutted. "You love him, but you won't leave me. So I have to be the one to decide for both of us."

"I don't want a divorce," Ilya repeated.

"Well maybe I don't want to live like this anymore," Svetlana said. "Constantly questioning whether my husband wants to be with me or with someone else. I want more out of my life while I'm still young enough to live it. Why drag this out another ten years being miserable when we can cut our losses and find people who actually want us?"

Ilya ran his hands through his hair. He wished he wasn't having this conversation in his boxers and nothing else. He wished he had more time to think of what to say to convince her to give him another chance. She couldn't really be willing to throw everything away over one argument.

He sat down next to Svetlana on the bed, facing her. "You are the only person who knows me and still sees the good in me," Ilya said, selfishly.

"Shane sees you," Svetlana said, pushing the hair out of Ilya's eyes.

"No," Ilya disagreed. "He thinks he does, but he doesn't. He won't like the real me, Sveta."

Svetlana lovingly took Ilya's hands in her own. "He sees the potential in you," she re-interpreted what Ilya was saying. "He sees the person that you could be rather than the person that you were when you met him. That's what happens when you're in love."

Ilya swallowed painfully. He hadn't cried since he was a teenager, but if there was ever a time to let his tears flow it would be now, sitting with the one person who has never judged him.

"Be the person that he sees," Svetlana instructed.

"I don't know if I can," Ilya said truthfully.

Svetlana was entirely calm, like she had already made her peace with their marriage being over.

"Do you love him," she asked.

Ilya had never admitted it out loud to anyone other than Shane. Of course he loved him. He loved him more than anything. Before he met Shane, Ilya didn't know that this kind of love existed or that he was capable of it.

"Yes," Ilya said. A tear fell from his left eyelid and slid down the bridge of his nose. "I love him."

She took Ilya's face in her hands, wiping the tears away with her thumbs. She was so soft with him even when he didn't deserve softness.

"Then don't waste it," she said with a smile. "Use it. Let it change you."

Had she always been this wise?

She kissed him briefly and pulled away too soon. The impression of her lips lingered.

“Do you think...” Ilya thought carefully about how he wanted to phrase his question. “If it wasn’t for him, would we have ever decided to end it on our own?”

A pensive look crossed Svetlana’s face. “Eventually,” she answered. “It hasn’t felt right in a while. I don’t know if it’s ever felt how it’s supposed to feel, you know?”

Ilya knew all too well what Svetlana meant.

“When you’re with the right person, you just know,” she said. “Even when it’s hard, you know that it’s right. And that makes it easy to fight for.”

Of course she was right. When Ilya tried to leave Shane, Shane wouldn’t let him. He fought for him. He deserved for Ilya to do the same. And that meant letting Svetlana go, no matter how difficult it would be for him to fathom a life without her as his wife.

“I think marriage is what ruined our relationship. We were happier before,” Ilya said nostalgically. He wasn’t quite sure why he felt the need to do a postmortem on their failed marriage before the body was even cold yet.

Svetlana shook her head. “It was already doomed before we got married,” she said matter-of-factly. Svetlana always had the better memory of the two of them. “We got married because we thought it would fix what was wrong.”

“It worked for ten years,” Ilya pointed out. “I would say that’s a success.”

She nodded sadly. “We’ve tried long enough. It’s time to let it go.”

It was time to let all of it go. Svetlana as a person, the idea of her, the dream of their life together, the reality, everything. None of it belonged to him. Her life was hers to manage, and he had no control over her decisions anymore.

Ilya stood up, found his pants on the floor and fumbled around in the pockets. He pulled out a keychain and started twisting one of the keys until it could be separated from the chain.

Ilya handed the key to Svetlana, who apprehensively accepted it.

“I won’t need this anymore,” Ilya said with a bittersweet smile.

Svetlana didn’t seem to understand the gesture.

“You don’t need to give it back,” she told him. “This is still your house.”

Now wasn’t the right time to discuss how to divide property. There would be plenty of time down the road to decide who wanted the toaster oven or the coffee maker. But Ilya knew that this wasn’t his house anymore.

“No it’s not,” Ilya said. “Do whatever you want with it. If you want to live here alone or with someone else, or if you want to sell it, it doesn’t matter to me. You decide. I won’t ask you for anything for it. It’s yours.”

“You shouldn’t make that decision just because you feel sorry for me,” Svetlana said.

“That’s not why,” Ilya told her.

“Then why?” Svetlana stared down at the key like it represented more than a just a piece of metal.

“You deserve a fresh start,” he said.

Svetlana’s fingers clutched the key tightly.

“Maybe one day I can have you and Shane over for dinner,” Svetlana suggested. Her lips barely curved upwards. “Wouldn’t that be nice?”

She and Ilya both laughed in a way that felt hopeful for their potential to be friends again in the future. It would take time, obviously. They both needed to heal from everything they had put each other through, especially Svetlana. Once she actually had time to process everything that Ilya had done, she would probably decide that it was best to never speak to him again. She'd be better off.

“You’re still my favourite person,” she said genuinely. “That won’t ever change.”

“I’ll always love you,” Ilya said. “Always.”

“I’ve never doubted that you love me,” Svetlana assured him. “The love was always there. It still is. It’s everything else about us that didn’t fit.”

The love was what kept them coming back to each other when they should have given up.

“Just go easy on me in the divorce,” Ilya said in jest.

“We can figure all that legal shit out later,” Svetlana said decisively. “I don’t want to stress out about it. This is hard enough without arguing over houses and cars and materialistic bullshit. That was never what our relationship was about anyway.”

Ilya lowered himself so that he was almost level with Svetlana. Then he locked his arms around her and picked her up into a hug. She stood with her knees on the bed and reached her hands up around the back of his neck. They stayed like that for a couple minutes, just holding each other. It was the closest he’d felt to her in years. Closer than he felt to her during sex.

She breathed him in, running her hands through his hair, taking these small liberties because he was still her husband, at least for the next few minutes.

“Promise me you'll try to be happy,” she said directly into his ear. “And if you break his heart, I will track you down and end you. So don’t fuck this up.”

Ilya chuckled in her ear. “I believe you.”

She finally broke away from his clasp and half-smiled.

Svetlana didn’t have to tell him to leave, he just knew that it was time.

He retrieved a few essential items like his phone, his briefcase, a clean pair of socks, and left their bedroom for what could very well have been the last time. As he walked down the hall with a mental clarity he rarely achieved before this moment, Svetlana's footsteps began following him. He turned around to see Svetlana in her robe, carrying something small in her palm.

"Wait," Svetlana called out. "Here," she said, covering her hand over his and placing her two rings in his hand. "Take them, I don't need them anymore."

Ilya wanted to reject them. They were her rings. And besides, what was he going to do with women's jewellery? But he could tell that she wanted him to take them, so he did. He carefully placed them in his pocket and kept walking.

Chapter End Notes

finally!! yay for divorce and trying to be healthier in relationships! :)

see you next time (either tomorrow or in a couple days i’m not sure how long it will take me to write the next chapter) ❤️

Chapter 41: Ilya

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there are currently 591 of you subscribed!!

it's another slightly shorter chapter today because personally shorter chapters work better for my small attention span ha!

i hope you enjoy it :)

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

One early morning in the days that followed his marriage-ending conversation with Svetlana, Shane and Ilya were silently eating breakfast together at their kitchen table. Ilya watched as Shane shoved his runny eggs around the corners of his plate without ingesting them.

“I’m getting a divorce,” Ilya announced.

Shane dropped his fork and it clattered against the plastic.

He watched as Shane’s expression turned from shock to concern and finally to tentative joy in a matter of milliseconds.

“Are you telling me the truth,” Shane asked, not wanting to get his hopes up too high.

“Yes,” Ilya said with a nod.

Shane was hesitant. “Is it because of me?”

“No,” Ilya said truthfully. “Well, yes and no. You aren’t the only reason.”

Shane didn’t seem like he knew how to react to that news appropriately. He tried to be comforting, but Ilya didn’t require comfort.

“Are you okay?”

“I feel great,” Ilya said, unburdened by any sense of tragedy or loss. “I feel better than I have in a long time.”

Knowing that he and Svetlana were finally free was an exhilarating feeling. Ilya was happier than he had been in years.

“Should we like, celebrate or something,” Shane asked uncomfortably. “Or is that too weird?”

Ilya thought about it for a second. “Depends on how you want to celebrate.”

Shane saw the stupid sexy look on his boyfriend’s face and shut it down immediately.

“Not now,” he said. “Maybe we can do something fun tonight. With our clothes on.”

“You mean like a date,” Ilya said, smiling.

“I guess, yeah,” Shane agreed. “Isn’t that what boyfriends do?”

Ilya had never heard Shane refer to him as his boyfriend before. He liked it. He wanted to hear him say it again.

“Am I your boyfriend,” Ilya asked a question he already knew the answer to.

“Do you want to be?”

Ilya put his index finger to his chin. “I’ll think about it and get back to you.”

“Fuck you,” Shane said, without any bite.

“Maybe tonight I will fuck you,” Ilya said, pretending to consider it. “If the date is good.”

“Maybe I’ll never speak to you again,” Shane said, unable to stop himself from smiling.

Ilya put his hands on Shane’s shoulders and looked into his eyes.

“Shane, you are my boyfriend,” he said reassuringly.

Shane stood and walked over to Ilya. He leaned down to kiss him and Ilya felt Shane’s lips graze his own. Ilya slipped his hands underneath Shane’s shirt and squeezed him closer.

“Don’t you have to go to work,” Shane asked.

Ilya reluctantly released him. He looked down at his watch. He needed to leave now if he was going to be on time to witness a thesis defence that he was currently regretting agreeing to be on the panel for.

”Yes,” Ilya said. “I’ll see you when I get home.”

“See you tonight,” Shane said with a parting kiss.

Ilya never expected that his teaching career would be killed by the caption of an instagram post that was less than one-hundred-and-fifty words long.

Ilya was in his office, finishing some last-minute marking when he learned about the infamous social media post that had been making the rounds since late the previous evening. The picture was of a random sunset, but it wasn't the picture that was concerning, it was the words beneath it.

The caption was vague and yet extremely pointed for those who knew about Ilya's reputation, which meant that almost every student and faculty member could easily determine who she meant.

Yesterday I was informed that there are not going to be formal disciplinary charges brought against the professor who ruined my freshman year due to “lack of evidence” (because apparently multiple people with the same story isn't enough evidence). I can't believe it's come to this, but since the university refuses to do anything despite the mounting allegations, I feel compelled to speak publicly.

I didn't go into this process looking for revenge, only accountability. It has become crystal clear to me over the past few weeks that no one is interested in providing any accountability, including the university administration, who are only interested in protecting themselves, not the students. We deserve better. I hope that any students who come forward in the future will have a better experience than I did. – Jess

Despite never mentioning his name directly, the people in the comments immediately determined which professor she was referring to. Even someone with a tangential connection to the university would have pointed the finger at Ilya based on her statement.

Marleau was the one to break the news to him over text. if Marleau was able to find it, then it was only a matter of time before the post made its way through the rest of the faculty and into

the hands of the administration. Ilya made the rational decision to get out ahead of it and arranged to meet with the Dean that afternoon. The only time she had available was at the end of the day at 5:30 p.m., which meant that Ilya was left to sweat it out until then.

The Dean was sat behind her desk, glaring at him disdainfully. Her entire demeanor screamed *this is your fault! You did this to yourself.*

"It's a post on Instagram," Ilya said dismissively. "It shouldn't matter."

"It *does* matter," she told him sternly. "This is the kind of story that can sink an administration. I've only been in this position for five months and I've already lost the trust of the entire student body. Your actions have made us *all* look bad. But with this latest development, I have to do something about it. It's out of my hands."

Ilya was bitter. "It's not my fault that your investigation didn't find anything you could use against me."

The Dean was sharp with him. "If you don't volunteer to take a step back from teaching, then the choice will be made for you. We'll stop offering your classes. You'll be a professor here in name only."

"You don't have the authority to do that," Ilya called her bluff.

"The students don't feel safe," she said, appealing to his sense of moral obligation. "I can't in good conscience allow you to continue to teach here if it puts students' health or safety at risk."

Please. This wasn't about her conscience. It was about her ego. She was angry that she didn't get her way. This was such a major overreaction.

“That’s not my fault,” Ilya denied her insinuation. “If anything, that post said more about you than it did about me. Now you’re trying to save face by making it look like you got rid of me.”

It felt like they were playing a game of chess and he had to anticipate her next five moves on the board.

“Think about your wife,” the Dean said, striking below the belt. “Do you really want to put her through the public humiliation? Just take a step back and we’ll re-evaluate in a few months.”

Ilya’s blood was boiling. *Take a step back.* This was his career. He had worked for this his entire adult life, and this woman thought she could take it away from him because a couple students got their feelings hurt?

“We’re separated,” Ilya said.

The Dean did not appear surprised by that information.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” she said insincerely.

“It’s amicable.”

“Sure,” she said, her tone grazing the edge of sarcasm.

Ilya thought about Shane and how close he was to being drafted. If this situation went any further and their relationship was outed to the world now, it would ruin Shane’s life. He thought about how much worse this could get for Shane if Ilya didn’t take his lashings and comply with what the Dean was asking of him.

He could take a step back from teaching. It wouldn't be the worst thing to happen to him. It might even be a blessing in disguise. Ilya had other passions. He'd been saying he wanted to write another book since the last one was published three years ago. He simply hadn't had the time between teaching and juggling various relationships to give his focus to such a monumental task. This could be the break he needed to really buckle down and get it done.

Now he only had one person that he needed to worry about. And Shane would be gone a lot of the time. Ilya would have the apartment to himself to write. It might be the perfect set up.

Ilya knew that the Dean wanted to see him leave permanently, but he wasn't willing to fully jump ship quite yet. He wanted to have the option to come back. Being a professor had been part of his identity for nearly half a decade. He couldn't live with the door being closed forever.

"I can go on a sabbatical," Ilya suggested. "Write a sequel to my novel and then come back next Winter and take over my classes."

It was a compromise. No one got exactly what they wanted, but at least this way the Dean could look like the good guy and seem like they handled the situation, and Ilya could finally accomplish something he'd been putting off for far too long. Sure, it would be mildly humiliating to leave teaching abruptly, and everyone would know that it was because of the post, but it would be worth it if it meant protecting Shane from any public fallout.

The Dean left him in suspense for a few moments. Then she slowly began nodding.

"I think that could work," she agreed before launching into her conditions. "But when you come back, you won't be teaching freshman classes anymore. You can teach the honours courses, but I think it would be better for everyone, including you, if there's no opportunities for a repeat of what happened this semester."

Ilya didn't disagree with her in principle. He was offended that she didn't think he was capable of controlling himself, but her assumption wasn't unfair. Only teaching the older undergraduate students would be more likely to prevent the rumours about his past activities with students from resurfacing. And he wasn't planning on having sex with any more of his students in the future. Hopefully, the rumours would eventually dissipate, and he could just be a regular professor whose personal life was entirely separate from his career.

“That makes sense,” Ilya agreed to those terms.

The tiny wrinkles in the Dean’s forehead disappeared once Ilya capitulated. She seemed relieved. That probably meant that Ilya should have fought harder. But truthfully, he wasn’t even that upset about leaving for a while. It would be a much-needed break. And it meant that Svetlana didn’t have to see him around campus for a few months, which would be positive for her. They needed to let things cool off and seeing each other at work was too much too soon.

“Do you smoke,” Ilya asked, attempting to be pleasant.

The Dean didn’t appreciate that question.

“Not at work,” she said harshly.

She straightened out her face. “I know that we may not have always gotten along.” That felt like a severe characterization considering that they had met each other less than a handful of times. “But I have only heard wonderful things about you as an educator,” she informed him. “We will be sorry to see you go, and glad to have you back in the classroom next Winter.”

Ilya resisted the urge to tell her to go to hell.

“Thank you,” he said, and he partly meant it. “I’ll see myself out.”

He left the Dean’s office with a sense of peace over this decision. He wasn’t going to stay somewhere that he wasn’t wanted. And clearly, he wasn’t wanted there anymore. At least not right now.

There were better things on the horizon for Ilya. He hadn’t forgotten the advice that Svetlana gave him when they broke up. He had love in his life now, and he wasn’t going to waste it.

He was going to work on himself and become the person he wanted to be. The person that Shane needed him to be. The man that Shane deserved.

When Ilya came home that day, Shane was sitting on the couch in their living room, appearing to be deep in thought. He barely noticed when Ilya walked through the door.

"Shane," Ilya said softly. "Sweetheart, I'm home."

Shane slowly turned his head and looked up at Ilya with soft eyes and a gentle smile.

"I saw the post," Shane told him. "And the comments."

"I figured you had," Ilya said.

"What are you going to do," Shane asked. "I can call Claire and see if she can help. It worked before."

This was different. This wasn't about a disciplinary process with clear rules and processes that had to be followed. It was the world of social media and reputational damage. Nothing Jess said was untrue. She had every right to say it. Any action Ilya took against her would only make the situation worse. It would make him look even guiltier than everyone had already decided that he was.

"My love," Ilya soothed him. "You don't have to worry about me. It's all been sorted out already."

"What do you mean," Shane asked anxiously. "What did you do?"

“I took care of it,” Ilya said vaguely, which only made Shane more terrified.

"Took care of it how?"

Ilya knelt down in front of Shane's legs and took his right hand.

"Do you trust me," Ilya asked.

Shane didn't answer. "Ilya, tell me what you did," he demanded.

“I made the decision that is best for everyone,” Ilya told him. “We decided that it would be a good idea for me to take a break from teaching for a little while.”

“You got fired,” Shane shouted. Ilya refused to let Shane's hand go.

“No,” Ilya assured him. “I’m just taking the next semester off. They are not going to offer my classes next year. Or maybe they will, but I won’t be the one teaching them.”

“They can’t do that,” Shane said, even though he had no idea what could or could not be done in response to a situation like this one.

“Yes they can,” Ilya told him, remaining composed. “It’s fine, I don’t want this to become a bigger deal than it already is.”

Shane yanked his hand away and took his phone out of his pants pocket.

“I’m calling Claire,” he said, typing her name into his contacts. “I won’t let them do this to you. It isn’t fair.”

Ilya grabbed gently took the phone out of Shane's hand before he could press the dial button.

"It's done," Ilya said conclusively. "There's nothing to be done about it now. And I feel good about this decision."

Shane was almost crying. His poor Shane. Ilya didn't want him to become even more involved than he already was. Quietly taking the semester off would be the best thing for everyone.

"But you love teaching," Shane said. "I know you do. I've watched you all semester. You love it."

Ilya did love teaching, but he loved Shane more.

"You can't do this for me," Shane told him. "You can't give up teaching for me. You'll resent me for it eventually."

Ilya had a secret that he'd been keeping from everyone because he never thought he would actually do it.

"There's something I haven't told you," Ilya said.

Shane sat up straighter, bracing himself for what Ilya was about to say.

"Nothing bad," Ilya guaranteed. "My publisher reached out to me six months ago. She asked if I was interested in writing a sequel to my first book. I hadn't seriously considered it until now. But I think this could be the perfect opportunity for me." He ran his thumb along Shane's forearm. "For us."

Shane looked confused.

“You wrote a book?”

“Yes,” Ilya confirmed. He was almost certain he had told Shane that before, but he wouldn't blame him for not remembering given everything that occurred in his life recently.

“I want to read it,” Shane said immediately.

“You can read it if you want,” Ilya allowed. “There’s a copy in our bedroom.”

He noticed Shane smile involuntarily at his use of the word *our*.

“I can even sign it for you,” Ilya joked.

Ilya waited on pins and needles for Shane to respond.

"So what you're saying is," Shane paused to think, "I won't be dating a professor, I'll be dating a writer?"

Close enough. “Is that okay with you,” Ilya asked.

Shane nodded enthusiastically.

“You’re adorable,” Ilya told him.

Shane smiled and shrugged. “You’re sexy.”

Ilya couldn't believe how easy Shane had made this conversation.

"You're not mad?" Ilya just had to make sure one last time.

"Why would I be mad," Shane asked cheerfully. "As long as you're okay with it and we're together, then I'm happy."

Ilya had no words. Shane was perfect.

"You are happy about this right," Shane asked.

"Yes sweetheart, I don't think I've ever been happier," Ilya promised. He felt like he could finally breathe again knowing that Shane wasn't mad at him. Then Shane stared up into Ilya's eyes and made Ilya question what he had ever done to get this lucky.

Thank god he's still here. Thank god I didn't lose him.

"Kiss me," Shane demanded.

Ilya kissed his way up Shane's thigh before sucking two of his fingers into his mouth to get them wet. He slowly entered him, Shane moaning as he stretched to accommodate Ilya's fingers.

"Perfect," Ilya said admiringly. "So perfect."

“Not perfect,” Shane argued. The rate of his breathing steadily increased with each thrust forward.

Ilya kept his eyes fixed on Shane as he moved his fingers faster, relishing in each of Shane’s small noises filling the air.

“You have no idea what you do to me,” Ilya growled.

Their plans were interrupted by an inconvenient knock at the door. It was a reasonable knock at first, but it quickly turned aggressive.

“Are you expecting someone,” Shane smirked.

“No,” Ilya answered seriously.

“Are you sure,” Shane pressed him. “You’re not bored of me already?”

The question was a joke, but Ilya could sense Shane’s underlying insecurity.

“Never,” Ilya said, running his free hand over Shane’s thigh. “That could never happen, my love. You know that, don’t you?”

Shane nodded self-consciously.

Ilya pushed into him another few centimetres and Shane’s breath hitched. The devoted look on Shane’s face was almost enough to send Ilya over the edge without even being touched.

Shane pulled Ilya up by his hair, but before their lips could meet, they were bombarded by yet another loud knock on the door.

“Ugh,” Ilya sighed. “I’m coming,” he yelled in the direction of the door, but it didn’t stop the knocking. He slowly removed his fingers and wiped them on a towel he kept next to the bed.

“Jesus,” Shane expressed his irritation. “It’s like nine o’clock.”

“I know sweetheart, I’ll get rid of them,” Ilya said, shifting off the bed. “Stay here and don’t move. I’ll be back in a minute to finish you off.”

Shane rolled his eyes and lay his head back on the pillow.

Ilya finished putting on his shirt and opened the door. When the door swung open, Shane’s mother was standing in the hallway with an unfriendly look on her face.

“Yuna,” Ilya exclaimed. “Are you looking for Shane?”

“No,” she replied. “I’m actually here to talk to you. Can I come in?”

Chapter End Notes

we're so close to the end of shane's time in college!! probably just one more chapter and we're done! (which makes me kind of sad aww)

see you tomorrow for probably another shorter chapter picking up right where this one left off!!

until next time 

Chapter 42: Shane

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

posting this early as a treat for the weekend!!

hope you like it :)

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

“Put a shirt on at least,” Shane requested as Ilya was exiting the room. Ilya complied, grabbing his wrinkled t-shirt off the edge of the bed and pulling it on as he was walking.

Shane stared up at the ceiling, waiting for his boyfriend to come back to bed and ravish him.

Thirty seconds went by. Then a full minute. He heard the low rumbles of Ilya having a heated conversation with the person at the door. Then Shane thought he heard his own name being mentioned and it clicked to him that it was his mother’s voice.

He quickly jumped out of bed, pulled on a shirt, tucked his erection into his boxer shorts and grabbed the first pair of pants he saw and put them on.

He opened the bedroom door with a creak and approach Ilya and his mother deep in conversation. They both turned to look at him at the same time.

“Oh god,” Ilya mumbled under his breath.

“Shane,” Yuna said, looking confused. “Were you... hiding in there?”

He could understand how it looked that way to an uninformed observer.

“No, we were just going to bed,” Shane said, innocently. “I didn’t realize it was you at the door.”

Yuna wasn’t buying that, but she shook off the awkwardness with ease.

“I want to talk to Ilya alone.”

Shane couldn’t leave his mother alone with Ilya. She would try to talk him out of dating him. She would convince him that he was ruining Shane’s life. No, Shane was staying right here where he could see and hear them.

“It’s okay,” Ilya assured him. “We’ll be fine, just go back to bed.”

“No,” Shane said firmly. “Anything you have to say to him, you can say in front of me.”

Yuna looked at Ilya and then at her son. She stepped over the threshold of the doorway and walked straight over to Shane. She wrapped her arms around him and held him tightly while he stood there stunned. Then Shane felt his arms reaching up to hug her back.

“Mom,” Shane breathed.

“I’m sorry,” Yuna whispered. “I’m so sorry. I hate not being able to talk to you.”

“I didn’t mean those awful things I said to you,” Shane told her.

“I know you didn’t,” Yuna said. “Neither did I.”

“I thought you didn’t love me anymore,” Shane admitted.

Yuna nearly started crying. Shane rarely witnessed his mother being overwhelmed by emotion.

“That could never happen.”

“I’m sorry I called you a control freak,” Shane said, and they both laughed. Yuna pulled away from their hug and gave Shane a couple small taps on his back.

“Oh honey,” Yuna said sympathetically, squeezing his left shoulder. “I didn’t mean to upset you.”

Shane pulled himself together. “I’m fine,” he said. “I’m just happy you came here. How did you know where I was?”

“Rose gave me the address,” she told him.

“Of course she did.”

It was moments like this that Shane was grateful that Rose seemed to be incapable of minding her own business.

Yuna glanced around the immediate area. “So this is where you’re living now,” she surmised.

“Yep,” Shane said.

“It’s nice,” Yuna gave him compliment. “I can see your fingerprints all over it.”

Shane took a minute or two to point out the various improvements he had made to Ilya's apartment.

"It looks great honey," she said, before turning her attention back to the reason she came there to begin with. "Is there a place that we can all sit and talk?"

While Shane was distracting Yuna with paint swatches, Ilya had discreetly cleared the two half-drunk bottles of Coors that were left out on the kitchen table from their dinner date earlier that evening.

"I'll make us some coffee," Ilya offered.

Yuna took a seat at the table. She didn't seem to be too keen on drinking caffeine.

"Do you have anything stronger," she asked.

Ilya was visibly delighted by her response. He and Yuna really weren't as polar opposite as they might have thought. They were both incredibly intelligent and stubborn and appreciated quality liquor.

And they both cared about what was best for Shane, even if they had different ideas on what exactly that entailed.

Ilya retrieved three glasses and set them down on the table. Then he sat next in the chair next to Shane and began pouring each glass approximately a quarter of the way full.

Yuna finished hers before Shane's glass had even been filled yet. Ilya got the message and handed her the bottle.

“I don’t find you charming,” Yuna said harshly.

“Mom please,” Shane begged her to be nice.

“What? I’m not some naïve eighteen-year-old that thinks you’re smart or interesting, I am a grown woman,” Yuna said factually. “I’m a mother. And I’m concerned about my son.”

“I would never do anything to hurt Shane,” Ilya promised her in a deadly serious tone.

Yuna was busy pouring herself another round. “I’m not saying that you would *intentionally* hurt him,” Yuna clarified as the liquid splashed against the bottom of her glass. “Even with the best of intentions, this relationship could go sideways very fast. I have to think about Shane’s future here.”

“Ilya is my future,” Shane said steadfastly. “Or at least, he’s a big part of it.”

Yuna gulped down the rest of her drink. “You are so close to everything you’ve ever wanted,” she said. “Why are you risking it all now?”

“Because I want more for my life than hockey,” Shane told her. “And Ilya makes me happy.”

“Do you have anything to add,” Yuna asked Ilya.

Ilya had been relatively quiet throughout their discussion, which was an anomaly for him.

He inhaled. “Your son is a very special person,” Ilya told Yuna.

“Obviously I know that,” Yuna confirmed. “But I don’t understand what it is that draws you to each other? What does a man in his thirties has in common with someone Shane’s age?”

It was a valid question. Truthfully, Shane had the same concern. He questioned what connection they shared outside of sex. What would happen when Ilya ran out of things to teach him? What would happen to their relationship when Shane was Ilya's age? Would Ilya still find him attractive, or would he get bored of him and move on to the next, younger, more naïve version of Shane, just like Svetlana said he would?

Shane took a while to answer. It was almost impossible to explain the invisible tether that kept him coming back to Ilya even when he knew it would be painful. Even when everyone was telling him to move on.

"He makes me feel safe," Shane said eventually. "When I'm with him, I feel free to be myself."

Shane put his hand on the table with his palm facing upwards and Ilya took it as an invitation. He squeezed his hand as Yuna observed them.

"You make me a better person," Ilya said to Shane. For a few seconds, they were just watching at each other like they were the only two people in the room.

Yuna looked at Ilya. "This is real for you? This isn't just some game that you're playing with my son?"

"It's not a game," Ilya assured her. "I love your son very much. More than I've ever loved anyone."

Yuna furrowed her eyebrows. "Can we address the elephant in the room," Yuna asked brazenly. "You're married to someone else."

Ilya wasn't wearing his wedding ring. Shane hadn't seen it in weeks, but he wasn't sure when he officially took it off.

“Legally yes,” Ilya responded calmly. “But we are getting a divorce.”

Yuna stayed quiet for a beat.

“Shane,” she said, staring at her son accusingly. “Did you know this?”

“He told me a couple days ago,” Shane explained. “Back when you and I weren’t talking.”

Yuna barely nodded, looking like she felt slightly guilty for the time she spent refusing to communicate with her son.

“Did you sign divorce papers,” Yuna turned her attention back to Ilya.

“Not yet,” Ilya answered, not backing down from Yuna’s scrutiny.

“Why not,” she asked.

“Mom,” Shane interjected. “It’s only been a few days. You can’t get divorced that quickly.”

“Sorry, I’ve never been divorced before,” Yuna sent a backhanded jab directly at Ilya.

“We have to be separated for a year,” Ilya informed her. “We can fill out the paperwork before that, but the only way a judge will grant us a divorce is if we’re separated for a year.”

“Do you have a lawyer,” Yuna asked.

“Mom!”

“What, maybe he’s looking for a recommendation,” Yuna said, clearly misstating her motivations in asking the question.

“I’m okay for now,” Ilya declined her offer. “We’re trying to be as non-contentious as possible.”

Yuna looked offended. “And you think I love conflict?”

Ilya nearly answered affirmatively, but then he glanced at Shane, who looked like he was about to have a heart attack, and took pity on him by continuing to be silent.

“I don’t care about the legal part of it,” Shane interrupted their sparing match. He smiled at Ilya and the smile was returned. “I’m happy mom,” Shane told her. “I promise.”

Yuna sighed. “I believe you,” she admitted. “I just think you’re being dumb. No offence, Ilya.”

“None taken.”

Yuna tapped her fingers on the table. “What’s going on with the hearing,” she asked. “Is it still going ahead?”

“No,” Ilya told her.

Yuna seemed surprised. “Really,” she asked rhetorically. “Hmm. Claire must have really scared them. You need to send her flowers,” she instructed Shane. “Nice ones. With a card.”

Shane made a mental note to send flowers to Claire’s law office on Monday.

“So you just get to keep your job,” Yuna expressed her astonishment. “That’s it? They don’t care that you fuck students?”

“God mom,” Shane buried his face in his hands.

“Sorry,” Yuna half-heartedly apologized. “They don’t care that you date your students?”

“Ilya’s taking some time off,” Shane spoke for him.

“They fired you,” Yuna asked. “They can’t do that.”

“I didn’t get fired,” Ilya said, probably tired of everyone making the same assumption. “I chose to leave. I’ve been thinking for a while about writing a sequel to my last book and now seems like the perfect opportunity.”

“He’s doing it for me,” Shane said, appreciatively.

Yuna was touched by the sacrifice. “You would give up teaching for Shane,” she asked. “For my son.”

“Yes,” Ilya said clearly.

Shane could tell that his mother was slowly losing her will to remain angry.

“Isn’t that your career,” she asked.

Ilya didn't even hesitate. "It's not the only thing I care about," he said. "I enjoy writing. My last book did fairly well. I make more money from writing than teaching."

"I'd never heard of your book," Yuna pointed out.

"It's not the type of thing you would read," Shane defended Ilya.

"Why, am I not cultured enough," Yuna asked, insulted.

"We're getting sidetracked," Shane pressed pause on this tangential argument. "Ilya's publisher wants him to write another book, and it's a good opportunity for him. And it means that he's not going to be a professor for the next eight months, which means that it's less likely that people are going to focus on what's going on between the two of us."

Yuna suddenly got very serious. "You can't tell anyone about this," she said to Shane. "You understand that right? If you want to do this, it has to be a secret. Family and friends only. No one else can know."

Shane wished that it didn't have to be that way, but he understood why they had to keep their relationship a secret.

"Yes, I know," Shane acknowledged. "And I'm okay with that."

"It's not going to be easy," Yuna emphasized.

"If it means that we can be together, then it's worth it," Shane stood firm.

Yuna still wasn't entirely convinced by what she had seen tonight, but it seemed like they were getting closer.

“I need you to know that you can still change your mind,” Yuna said. “If you decide in a year that this isn’t what you want anymore, you don’t have to keep going just to prove me wrong.”

“I’m not going to change my mind,” Shane told her.

“But it’s okay if you do.”

“I won’t.”

“Just promise me that if that ever changes, you won’t stay to spite me.”

Shane agreed, if only to assuage his mother’s fears. “Yes mom,” he conceded. “I promise.”

Yuna stared down at her empty glass. “I think that’s enough talking for tonight,” she decided. “I’m tired. I’m sure you both are too. Let’s pick this up another time, Shane. We still have a lot more to talk about.”

Shane nodded. “Maybe we can get coffee sometime next week.”

Yuna’s face brightened. “I’d like that, honey. Text me and we’ll find a time that works.” She stood up and Ilya and Shane both got up to walk her to the door.

She gave Shane one last hug before departing.

“Sleep well,” Yuna told him.

She pointed her finger at Ilya. “If you hurt my son, or if anything happens to him, I’ll kill you.”

She turned to Shane. “That means that you need to tell me if he fucks up.”

“I will,” Shane said, shooting a look at Ilya.

She kissed his cheek. “Sleep well, honey. I’ll see you soon.”

“See you soon mom.”

Shane watched her walk down the hallway for about ten seconds before finally shutting the door.

They were alone again. When he looked behind him, Ilya was smiling.

“What?”

Ilya shrugged. “That went well,” he noted. “Better than I thought it would.”

“Same,” Shane agreed. “I was nervous that she wouldn’t like you,” he joked.

“She still doesn’t,” Ilya stated his observation.

“She’ll come around,” Shane said confidently.

“And if she doesn’t?”

“She will.”

Ilya put his hands in his pockets.

“What do we do now?”

Shane considered all the possibilities. For the first time in a while, he was excited about the future again. It seemed completely unknown and terrifying, but also, weirdly, he wasn't afraid of it. Because now he had Ilya. And whatever obstacles they faced, they would face them together.

“Anything we want.”

“Anything I want,” Ilya asked.

“Within reason,” Shane added a caveat. “You can start by taking me back to bed like you promised.”

“I can do that,” Ilya easily agreed.

Shane smirked and then began racing towards the bedroom, inciting Ilya to chase him. Ilya tackled him onto the bed, drowning him in kisses.

“Now finish what you started,” Shane demanded.

Chapter End Notes

and with that, we're done with shane's college arc! it only took me 144,000 words 💜

any guesses for what comes next?? let me know in the comments and see you next time (most likely in a couple days)!

Chapter 43: Shane (6 months later)

Chapter Notes

hey ❤️

there are 612 people subscribed and almost 1000 people who left kudos which is so wild!!

sorry for the late update! i went to a party on saturday and was recovering yesterday. plus i've been having a bit of writer's block with this latest chapter.

i have a lot more ideas for the future of this story but lately i've been considering making it a series. i feel like i want to wrap up this part of the story in a positive way before i start causing more chaos lol. ultimately it's always going to be a happy ending no matter how many parts it is split into, but i feel like this is a perfect opportunity to leave shane's college part of the story behind at a point where hollanov are in a good place.

that means that this will be the last chapter in this first part of the story. it will serve as an epilogue to the previous 42 chapters and a prologue to future chapters in this series

****be sure to subscribe to the series to be notified of future chapters**!!!**

enjoy :)

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

When Shane stepped off the ice, he felt a rush of pride and defeat. There was no feeling in the world that Shane disliked more than losing, and losing on home ice was even more of a punch to the gut. But he was also the sole goal scorer on their team that night, which softened the blow and made him feel like less of a failure.

They weren't the top team in the league (they didn't even rank in the top 20 last season) and Shane had known that when he was drafted, but the loss stung all the same. He reminded himself that dynasties weren't built in a day. It would take time to mold this team into a success, and Shane was willing to put in the work.

A hand came down hard on his shoulder.

"Good game, kid."

He didn't need to turn around to recognize the voice attached to the hand. It was Donovan, one of the veterans on the team. He was nearly twice Shane's age, and he was always very encouraging. In fact, Shane appreciated everyone on the team. It was a massive improvement from his previous year playing college hockey. He couldn't say that he missed that time in his life.

Except for one thing, he missed being in Ilya's class every Monday and Wednesday morning. At least Shane could hold onto the one positive that no student would have the opportunity to take Ilya's classes this semester. Shane wasn't sure how he was going to handle the insecurity of Ilya going back to work in January. It was already starting to eat away at him.

Ilya still had three months left on his unofficial probation before he could return to teaching. As far as Shane knew, he wasn't anywhere close to finishing his book and Shane hadn't seen him write in over a month. He told himself that Ilya was probably getting the majority of the work done when Shane was out of town.

"Thanks," Shane said with as much enthusiasm as he could muster. "It didn't feel like it."

"You scored a goal," Donovan reminded him. "Give yourself a break. We can't win them all. You played your best and that's what matters."

If playing his best meant that they still lost, then his best clearly wasn't good enough.

"A couple of us are going out tonight," he said. "Are you in?"

Shane should have gone home. It was one of his nights with Ilya and he knew better than to waste their time together.

At the same time, he couldn't exactly say the reason that he wasn't able to go out with everyone. It's not like he could tell them that he had a thirty-four-year-old boyfriend at home

waiting for him. And they would definitely be expecting their new rookie assistant captain to have a drink with the rest of the team to drown their sorrows after a loss.

“Yeah,” Shane said. “Absolutely.”

He heard a few mild cheers erupt around him from the other players. This was going to be a good season. He just had a feeling.

The next thing Shane remembered was Ilya violently shaking him awake.

“It's time to get up,” a gruff voice said. “Wake up, sleepyhead. You can't sleep all day long.”

Shane would have slept all day if he had a say in the matter.

Ilya nudged his arm. “Up,” he demanded.

Shane groaned and pulled the blanket over his head, but that didn't stop Ilya from shaking him even harder to get him to comply.

“I'm awake, I'm awake,” Shane said to get him to stop.

When he lowered the blanket and opened his eyes, Ilya was hovering over him, already dressed.

“Your mother will be here soon,” he said, pushing Shane's hair back.

Shane pulled his heavy head off the pillow.

“What time is it,” Shane mumbled.

“Almost one o’clock,” Ilya said, casually drifting his finger over Shane’s collar bone.

At that information, Shane’s entire body jolted upwards.

“Why did you let me sleep that long,” he asked like it was Ilya’s fault for letting him sleep even though Shane was a grown man who knew how to properly set an alarm.

Shane was exhausted and hungover from last night’s festivities. Every muscle in his body ached. He wanted to dunk his head into an ice bath.

He was not in any state to see his mother.

“Don’t be mad at me,” Ilya chastised. “I’m not the one who got drunk with my teammates last night.”

Ilya reached past him for the glass of water that he put on the side table and handed it to Shane, along with two Advil. Shane dutifully took the little red pills from out of his palm and washed them down.

Shane was supposed to spend the night with Ilya last night. And yet Ilya was still taking care of him even though he didn’t come home until after Ilya was already asleep.

Ilya took the glass back. “Go shower. I’ll talk to her when she gets here.”

The thought of Ilya and his mother being alone for any extended period of time made him nervous. Yuna had been slowly warming up to the idea of their relationship, but Shane could tell that she hadn't fully accepted it. It was obvious by the way she treated Ilya like he was Shane's roommate instead of his boyfriend.

But right now Shane was in no position to argue with him about it. He needed to shower and dry his hair and get dressed before his mother walked through the door.

"I won't take long," Shane promised. "Just act normal please. I don't need her having any more reasons to despise you."

"What are you talking about, Yuna loves me," Ilya joked.

His optimism was cute. "Keep thinking that."

As he was towelling off, Shane heard the front door open. He listened as Ilya and his mother made polite small talk and tried to get dressed as fast as possible to save them the awkwardness.

"Hi Yuna," Ilya said.

"Ilya," Yuna acknowledged. "Where's Shane?"

"He's coming," Ilya promised. "He's tired after playing last night."

"Right," Yuna said skeptically.

Shane rushed out the bedroom a few seconds later, wearing biker shorts and an old t-shirt. His hair was still wet from the shower.

"Mom," Shane said. "You're here."

Yuna's eyebrows drew together. "Weren't you expecting me? I drove all the way here from Ottawa and my own son forgot I was coming?"

Ilya was already attempting to exit the situation. "I'm heading out for a few minutes," he said as he pulled his shoes onto his feet.

"Okay," Shane called after him. "Remember to pick up—". Before he could finish his request, Ilya was already gone. The door shut behind him, and then the two Hollanders were alone.

Six months ago, Yuna had shown up at their apartment without being invited and they had ended their fight. They weren't actively fighting anymore, but things were still far from how they once were. While their relationship wasn't perfectly healed, at least they were talking. As long as she was still talking to him, Shane could handle Yuna's reservations about his relationship.

He hugged his mother quickly before she could comment on his disheveled appearance. Her arms hovered over his back. The fabric of his shirt was clinging to the surface of his damp skin.

"Long night," she asked, pulling away enough that she could examine his flushed cheeks and bloodshot eyes up close.

"Kinda," Shane agreed.

"Well can you pull yourself together for a minute and sign some papers," Yuna asked rhetorically. "Claire sent over the contract this morning, it just needs your signature."

"Shouldn't I read it first," Shane asked.

"It's just shoes," Yuna said flippantly. "It can't be that complicated. And besides, Claire's already handled it. We just need you to sign and then the deal is done."

Shane stared down at the words on the page. The contract was at least twenty pages long and he couldn't understand what half the words meant.

"Do you have a -". He looked up and Yuna was already holding a pen for him to use.

"Thanks," Shane said as he took it from her.

"She marked everywhere you need to sign," Yuna mentioned.

He put the papers down on the kitchen counter so that he could have a flat surface to sign on. He flipped through until he'd signed next to each one of the coloured tabs. Once he was done, he handed the papers back to Yuna, who looked them over meticulously to ensure that Shane signed correctly. Then she put the papers back her purse.

"I'll fax these to Claire this afternoon."

"Can you stay for a few minutes," Shane asked. "We can talk?"

Yuna nodded. "Sure honey," she said like she wasn't expecting him to offer. She had just driven two hours to give him papers that could have been sent to him over email. He knew she was too stubborn to say that she wanted to see him in person, but Shane knew, because he was just as desperate to see her. He only wished that they could spend time together without the cloud of his and Ilya's relationship constantly hanging over their every interaction.

"I'll make us some tea," Shane decided.

Yuna put her purse on the back of the chair and sat down at the table while Shane filled the kettle with water from the tap.

"How have things been," she asked curiously. "I haven't seen you in a couple weeks."

"I've been really busy," Shane said, sitting down across from her. "But otherwise, it's been good."

"And things with Ilya are good," she asked, doing her best to mask her lingering concerns. Even after six months, there was still an awkwardness between them that Shane couldn't fix. He hoped that one day it would just get better on its own, but he was losing faith in that ever happening.

"They're really good," Shane said, cursing the wariness in his tone.

He always felt like he needed to justify his relationship to her - to everyone really.

"You can tell me if something's wrong," she assured him. Shane wished that his mother wasn't constantly bracing for the worst in him and Ilya's relationship.

"As long as you're happy," she said sincerely. "That's all that matters to me."

Shane didn't think that was entirely true.

"I know you don't like him," Shane said, leaning into the tension.

Yuna's eyes softened. "It's not that I don't like him," she clarified. "It's that I don't want you to have to give up anything for him. This should be the happiest time in your life. So many amazing things are happening for you. You can't let him hold you back."

"He doesn't hold me back," Shane argued.

"Not yet," she argued.

They were momentarily distracted by the high-pitched whistle of the kettle.

Shane stood up and walked over to the stove. He removed the kettle from the element and turned it off.

"Is Earl Grey okay?" He reached for the box without hearing her answer.

"Sure."

Shane prepared the tea bags and poured the hot water. Then he placed one of the mugs in front of his mother. Yuna cradled her mug in her hands, the tips of her fingers nearly touching.

"How are your teammates," she asked, changing the subject to something safe and non-Ilya related.

Shane gave the short answer. "Great. Everyone's really nice."

Even if they weren't the most skilled team, and certainly no one was betting on them even making it to the playoffs this year, personality-wise they were leaps and bounds ahead of his previous team.

Yuna seemed uncertain. "You know you can tell me if they're not."

"Everything's good mom, I promise," Shane told her. "Your tea is probably getting cold."

Yuna glared. "Has Ilya been to any of your games?"

He had gone to Shane's first home game, but none afterwards. He only got two complementary tickets for friends and family to come to home games, and he usually gave them to Rose and Lily or Hayden and Jackie for their date nights.

"He's been to a couple," Shane said. "But he prefers to just watch them on TV."

Yuna sounded doubtful. "Right," she said. "And how's the book coming along? You haven't talked about it in a while."

Shane blew on the hot tea in his mug, cooling it enough to drink. It bought him a few precious seconds before he had to think of what to say.

Ilya hadn't talked about the book for in weeks, and Shane didn't want to question his process. He kept saying that he was looking for inspiration, and that once he found the right inspiration, the book would just write itself. Shane didn't think that made any sense, but he also wasn't a writer, so he didn't press him on it.

"We honestly aren't spending that much time together right now," Shane said honestly. "We're both busy with other things and prioritizing our careers."

Yuna smiled sympathetically. "You guys love each other," she said as a fact. "You'll be fine."

Shane found it troubling that his mother was more optimistic about the state of his relationship than he was.

"How do you know," Shane asked.

"I've been married twenty-five years," Yuna reminded him. "It's not always easy and certain times are harder than others, but when you love each other, you just keep working on it and eventually things will fall into place."

Shane wished that it were as easy as it sounded. He had never been in a real adult relationship until now, and he felt like he had been thrown overboard without a life vest and now he could barely keep his head above water.

"Sometimes I wish I could be in two places at once."

How had this turned into a therapy session?

"You need to find time to reconnect with each other," Yuna helpfully suggested.

Shane didn't understand what she meant by *reconnect*. They reconnected every time Shane was in Montreal.

"Reconnect?"

"Yes," Yuna explained. "Shut out the rest of the world and just be alone together. Find a time that works for both of you every week and put it on your calendars."

"We were alone together today before you got here," Shane noted.

Yuna tilted her head a few inches to the left. "You know what I mean," she said knowingly. "Spend quality time together." She trailed off once she noticed that Shane was confused. "You know what I mean, don't you?"

Shane took a slow sip from his mug and waited.

“Shane, you’re too old for me to have to explain this to you,” Yuna said.

That’s when it clicked. Did she think that was why he wanted to talk to her? Because he needed her advice on... *oh god*.

“It happens in every relationship eventually,” she went on. “But you two have only been together a few months, so I can see why that’s a little concerning.”

Shane's face must have been on fire.

"Oh my god mom," he said, horrified. "We're fine. I promise."

“Are you sure,” she asked. “Because you can tell me.”

Shane shifted his gaze. “I can't talk about that stuff with you.”

"Why not," Yuna asked like it was a perfectly acceptable conversation for a mother and son to have. "Who are you supposed to talk to if not your mother?"

The list of potential candidates wasn't very long, but talking to any one of them would have been much less awkward than asking his mother for sex advice.

"Rose," Shane suggested. "Hayden, Jackie, literally anyone else."

Yuna laughed and Shane realized how much he missed hearing her laugh. They were always so serious with each other now.

“Relationships are work,” Yuna said, imparting some motherly wisdom. “But they’re worth it. If you love him-”

“I do,” Shane strongly confirmed. “I really do.”

“Then make sure that *he* knows that.”

“I’m trying,” Shane said with a sigh.

He was so preoccupied with embarrassment that he hadn't noticed that Yuna finished her tea.

"I should go," Yuna announced. "I want to get home before your dad. Do you know yet if you're coming home for Thanksgiving?"

Unlike American Thanksgiving, where there were no games scheduled on the day, there were always games scheduled during the first Monday of October.

"I have an away game that day," Shane told her.

"We can do it another day," Yuna conceded. "Your dad would really love to see you."

She said it in a tone that didn't give Shane much of a choice but to agree.

"Yeah, of course. I'd love to see him too," Shane agreed.

Then came the more controversial question. "Do you want Ilya to come?"

Ilya didn't have any family in Canada, and Shane felt bad leaving him out of holidays. Ilya never complained or even seemed bothered by it, but he was so isolated now. As much as he felt envy towards Svetlana, he also secretly believed that Ilya would be happier if she was in his life. He didn't know the last time they had seen each other, and he didn't feel like it was his place to bring it up.

Yuna slouched a little. "I think it should just be for family," she said as politely as she could. Shane wanted to tell her that Ilya was his family now, but he kept that to himself.

"Sure mom, just tell me when and I'll be there."

Shane was on his phone at the dinner table, which would be undeniably rude if his boyfriend wasn't engaging in the exact same activity two feet away.

As he was asking Rose the meaning of a meme she sent him, the message banner appeared across the top of his screen. He got a text from Donovan.

how's the hangover?

Shane sent a one word response.

good

Two seconds later he got another text:

sorry about that by the way

Shane's hand hovered over the buttons. He debated sending anything back.

that's a terrible apology

Shane felt eyes on him and looked up to see Ilya staring. At the same time, Shane also realized that he had been smiling down at his phone.

He tried to control his facial expressions, but that only made his behaviour seem more questionable.

“Who was that,” Ilya asked bluntly.

Shane placed the phone back on the table face down. He didn’t answer right away. It was suspicious.

“Don’t say Rose,” Ilya told him, reading his mind easily.

“I wasn’t going to say Rose,” Shane lied. “It’s one of the guys on the team. Not important.”

That wasn’t enough to get Ilya off his back.

“It’s nobody,” Shane argued. “Can we just drop it?”

“Is *nobody* named Donovan?”

Did Shane really talk about him that much? He definitely needed to tone it down.

Shane shrugged. "He's checking in on me after last night."

Ilya smirked.

"Are you making fun of me or something," Shane asked, almost irritated.

"I think you like him," Ilya theorized.

Shane acted oblivious. "*Like him?* How?"

In Shane's mind, it was nothing more than a mentor-rookie dynamic. But he could see how that would make Ilya's alarms go off considering how their relationship began.

"You think he's hot," Ilya observed.

"You're so wrong," Shane shook his head as Ilya continued smirking at him. "Fuck off. I don't think anyone is hot."

Shane couldn't tell if Ilya was playfully teasing him or if he was genuinely upset. Ilya had once told him that he didn't believe in monogamy or marriage. He hoped that his opinion had changed since they started living together, but they never really talked about it. Shane was too afraid of the answer.

As if he could sense Shane's discomfort, Ilya crossed to the other side of the table so that he was directly behind Shane's chair. He wrapped his arms around Shane, letting his hands roam over Shane's firm chest through his shirt.

"It's okay sweetheart," Ilya said, teasingly. "I know you have a weakness for older men."

Ilya quickly kissed the side of his face before going back to his own seat.

"He's just being nice," Shane said, embarrassed.

"Shane, I don't care," Ilya assured him. "You can think other men are hot. That doesn't bother me."

Ilya was stronger than him because it would really upset Shane if he knew that Ilya was attracted to another person. Especially if he saw that person practically every day.

"It doesn't?"

Shane wondered if it would be wrong for him to want Ilya to be jealous. Not anything crazy, but some slight possessiveness would make him feel more secure in a twisted way.

"No," Ilya answered simply. "I trust you."

Shane had never given Ilya a reason not to trust him. He had never cheated on him. Ilya had never technically "cheated" on him either, as far as Shane was aware, but he was unfairly holding on to some resentment about Ilya lying to him about not having sex with Svetlana. Knowing that Ilya could still be lying to him kept Shane awake some nights.

"I love you," Shane told him, smiling across the table.

Ilya saw an opportunity to make Shane give him compliments and immediately took it.

"Why," he asked, being intentionally clueless. "What do you love about me?"

"Do you need a list?"

Ilya leaned back and took a sip of wine. He wasn't letting him off the hook.

"Okay," Shane started. "I love that you made us dinner."

"That's not a good one," Ilya stopped him. "Doesn't count. I want real reasons."

Shane struggled to articulate why he was in love with Ilya. Clearly, there wasn't anything rational about their relationship. It was more of an instinctual feeling deep in Shane's gut telling him that this is where he was meant to be.

"I love..." Shane was embarrassed by the thought in his head before he had even said it out loud. "I love how gentle you are with me," Shane finished. "I never wanted that with anyone before you."

The mood had turned somber.

"You're my safe place," Shane said.

They were being serious now. This wasn't a joke anymore.

"There's no one else I'd rather share my life with. I want you for the rest of my life. And I don't care how many people know or the fact that everyone seems to think it's a horrible idea for us to be together. I know that you're my person, and that someday way *way* in the future, we're going to get married, and maybe even adopt a dog or something."

"You want a dog," Ilya asked, tears filling his eyes.

"I said *one day*," Shane repeated.

"One day could be tomorrow," Ilya said playfully.

"Or it could be ten years from now."

"But you want those things one day," Ilya asked seriously.

"Yes," Shane answered. "I want all those things, and I only want them with you."

They stayed like that for a few moments, soaking in the joy they felt until Ilya told Shane to stop being cute and finish his dinner.

"What if I'm ready for something else," Shane asked forwardly.

"Then you'll need your energy," Ilya replied. He tilted his head forward and gestured to Shane to eat.

Shane picked up his fork and twirled it in his hand before stabbing it into a glazed carrot and crunching it between his incisors.

Shane briefly came up for air. When he opened his eyes he was staring down Ilya's legs and feet. Ilya's toes were curled in pleasure.

“Fuck,” Shane moaned. Shane used his hand to work him while he waited for his brain to catch up. Shane's thighs were shaking but Ilya wasn't slowing down. “I'm gonna come,” Shane warned. Seconds later his cock spasmed and released into Ilya's mouth.

As he came, Shane felt weightless. His arms momentarily stopped working. He pushed through the feeling and took Ilya into his mouth again, sucking on him enthusiastically until he came down his throat.

Ilya lightly slapped Shane's ass twice.

“That was good,” Shane said out loud.

“Are you surprised,” Ilya asked, kissing Shane's thigh.

He lifted himself off Ilya's face and out of their sixty-nine configuration. Then he cuddled up beside him.

Now that they were dating exclusively, Shane often worried that their sex life was too vanilla. The fact that he had to travel so frequently did not quell Shane's fears. He knew how easy it would be for Ilya to find someone to sleep with while he was out of town. Any time he didn't text Shane back quickly enough, his mind would immediately start to question whether Ilya was with someone else.

He would offer to try new things and ask Ilya if there was anything he wanted to do in bed, but the answer was always some variation on how amazing Shane was and how much Ilya loved him. Shane felt like he was holding back but was too afraid to hurt Shane's feelings.

"Talk to me," Ilya implored him.

"About what," Shane asked distractedly.

"Anything," Ilya said. "I want to hear your voice."

Shane smiled to himself, thinking back on his earlier conversation with Yuna.

"My mom thinks we're not having enough sex."

Ilya's eyes widened with sudden interest. "Did you tell her that?"

"Of course not," Shane defended himself. "It's not true, anyway."

Ilya nodded softly. "You don't think so?"

He asked the question in a way that made Shane think that Ilya agreed with his mother.

"You think she's right," he stated.

"I just know that I miss you," Ilya said, making Shane's heart melt inside his chest. "Even when you're here, it's like your mind is somewhere else."

Shane felt guilty for being distracted during their time together. He needed to put Ilya higher on his list of priorities. His relationship with Ilya should have been his number one priority. He didn't want to end up in a place where he neglected Ilya until he grew resentful. There had to be balance.

"I should've come home last night," he partially apologized. "I wasted one of our nights together."

Ilya shook his head reassuringly. "Don't worry about it, love. We have the rest of our lives to be together."

Ilya's words gave Shane permission to let himself begin to relax.

"Are you happy," Ilya asked.

"Yes," Shane said, without much emotion behind it.

"Are you sure," Ilya asked. "Because you don't sound sure."

"Right now, I'm tired," Shane told him. "But yes, of course I'm happy."

Ilya looked up at him like he needed more from him than he was able to give.

"What do you want me to say," Shane asked genuinely. "Ilya, there's nowhere else I'd rather be than here with you. You know that already."

To get his point across, Shane leaned up to kiss him, tasting the tanginess on his tongue.

"Do you remember when you first met me," Shane asked an inch away from Ilya's lips.

"You mean eight months ago," Ilya asked sarcastically.

Eight months.

It had only been eight months. It felt much longer than that.

"Did you ever think we would end up here," Shane asked, playing with Ilya's chest hair. "Did you think we would really be together like this?"

Ilya exhaled loudly.

"Because I didn't," Shane answered his own question.

"I didn't either," Ilya agreed.

He took Shane's chin in his right hand and lifted it so that he could look in his eyes. "But I'm glad that we are. I'm glad that you pushed me to do this. That you didn't give up on us even when I wanted you to."

Shane would never give up on him.

"I know I'm not perfect," Ilya acknowledged.

"That's an understatement," Shane said through a smile.

"I just don't want you to regret it," Ilya told him. "I want to make you as happy as you make me."

It was so perfect when it was just the two of them. When they could block out the noise and be together without outside judgment or opinions getting in the way of what they both knew was right.

"You already do," Shane said truthfully. "You're everything to me. There's nothing more I could ever want."

"Except maybe a dog," Ilya said. Shane should have known better than to bring up that subject in the first place.

"We'll see," he conceded.

Shane held onto Ilya's waist as he began to drift off into sleep. He knew that tomorrow he would have to leave him again, and that it would continue to be difficult at times to balance all the important things in his life. But as he shut his eyes, Shane felt slightly less terrified of the future than he did yesterday, and he knew that it would only get better from here.

Chapter End Notes

hope you liked this ending/beginning chapter!!

things still clearly aren't perfect for hollanov but relationships rarely are! they are hard work but worth it!

talk to me in the comments otherwise i will assume you hate me (this is a joke for obvious reasons) :)

love y'all <3

End Notes

let me know any tags that i missed ❤️

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!