

roman holiday

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roman holiday

by [anincompletelist \(soldouthaz\)](#)

Summary

A little rattled by Rozanov's sudden coldness after the olympics, Shane decides to follow a gut feeling that something might be wrong, even if it's not really any of his business. Even if they don't *do* that. Don't care.

He does find Ilya, eventually. But Sasha gets to him first.

Notes

WARNINGS in end notes for those who don't want spoilers!

this is a mix of book and show -- the scene i'm expanding on is specifically the show's iteration, but i'm using the book timeline which means shane and ilya started hooking up in 2011. (so for three years at this point when the fic takes place)

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS: **once again a massive thanks to [this code](#) by smugrobotics. to use this super cool feature on a laptop, hover over the text. to use it on mobile, CLICK on the text.** my french is admittedly better than my russian, but i am most definitely not fluent in either (especially the russian) so feel free to kindly let me know if there are any egregious mistakes. x

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

Shane stares at the last text he sent, paranoid that he'll get an answer the moment he looks away from it. Even if he hasn't gotten one the entirety of the week before.

Or. He has, Shane guesses, yesterday when they'd seen in each other in person. And that one had been pretty clear: Rozanov wanted to be left alone. By Shane, if not everyone else too.

It's none of his business. He and Rozanov don't *do* this—don't worry about each other. They meet up when they're in the same city and they spend half a night together and then one of them is leaving again, and usually that works. They're both busy. They're both distracted. Half the time Shane forgets just how much he wants it until the moment they're under the same roof again.

But it's different. It's Russia, and Shane is comfortable enough to admit—inside of his own head, silently, to no one—that maybe he'd been slightly excited about it. For all of the regular reasons, sure. But also because Rozanov has been to Montreal multiple times at this point for games and to meet up. And Shane has been to Boston, but he doubts that seeing the city is the same as seeing where Rozanov had grown up. Where he'd found his passion for hockey. The place that led him to where he is now.

From the moment they touch down though, everything seems to go wrong. Shane's texts go unanswered before the game. Russia loses to Latvia. Shane spends hours pushing curfew and his own personally imposed bedtime researching how dangerous it is to be anything other than heterosexual here, and then spirals about it until morning. He texts Rozanov again and gets nothing. Watches an interview on his phone afterward where it looks like the muscle in Rozanov's jaw is going to break from how hard he's grinding his teeth.

And then Shane sees him in person, and somehow it gets worse.

Something is obviously wrong, and it's a little humiliating to be reminded so blatantly of precisely how much this *really isn't his business*. But it's just such a stretch from the way Rozanov typically is, and while Shane had expected him to be on his best behavior, he hadn't expected Rozanov to walk around as if he were actively avoiding landmines underneath his feet.

Also. Shane's pretty familiar with how it feels to hide what he's feeling so well and get so good at it that no one asks. Everyone else seems to think that Rozanov is just focused, locked in. And maybe Shane shouldn't know, it's sort of *weird* that he knows so inarguably that something is wrong, but he can't make himself ignore it. Rozanov goes out of his way to check on him if something goes badly on the ice or in the press. It's the least Shane can do to return the favor, really.

So. Yeah, it hurts a little when he's dismissed so easily. When Rozanov can hardly even look in his direction. As if Shane is something needy and annoying that he's suddenly lost the patience to tolerate despite spending almost the entire time they've known each other relentlessly finding ways to be alone with him.

Shane tells himself it's fine. He gets irritated, at first. Decides that he's going to ignore Rozanov until he gets back on a plane to Montreal, and then maybe some more after that to give him a taste of his own medicine. He turns off his phone and hangs out with the guys, catching the events he'd been excited to see and keeping his parents updated about how it's going.

He caves eventually, awake and alone in his hotel room while the rest of his team goes out to sample the nightlife. Once again, there's no answer.

He shocks all of them the following night, when they invite him out with them and he says yes.

"No shit," they rally, ruffling his hair and slinging arms around his shoulders. "You sure you're feeling alright, Hollander? You never come out."

Shane gives the shrug he'd practiced in the mirror before he left the hotel room.

"While in Russia, right?"

They leave to the sound of whoops and cheers, and Shane is funneled into the back of a rental car and driven to some party one of his teammates heard about from a friend of a friend. Shane sort of hates the way he burns with envy when he considers that someone else might be *friendly* with Rozanov too.

He leans in toward his knees in the backseat, cramped and already warm, phone brightness on low in his clammy palm. He clicks on *Lily*, and an incriminating sea of blue fills the screen again.

Hey! U doing ok?

He locks it again and shoves it into his pocket. If Rozanov won't meet him in the middle, Shane will just go to him. Just to make sure he's okay, just to say that he'd *tried*, and then maybe he can sleep okay until the flight home.

Or at all, would be nice.

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The bars in Russia are not like the ones in Canada. And Shane's never even mastered navigating *those*.

He splits off from the rest of the team pretty early on, which is necessary if he's going to go searching for Rozanov. It isn't as crowded as he thought it might be but it's easy to get lost in the dim lighting and the fog of smoke, anything beyond the few feet in front of him a dark, hazy blur.

The music doesn't help. It's loud and immediately makes his temples ache, and Shane grits his molars against whatever retort Rozanov might have about his lifestyle choices. There are several floors of the big, flat building, walls erected in odd places that make his head spin when he rounds yet another corner only to find more strangers and dead ends.

He drops down onto a barstool when he finds one, rubbing at his forehead and pulling his phone from his pocket. The bars of service in the top corner flicker, dwindling until they go dark. He clicks on the group text they'd started and tries to ask where they are, and the message comes back with an error.

"Fuck," Shane mutters. This was stupid. So, *so* stupid.

He should have known better than to go with them. It's not like it's his usual team, not like he can find Hayden and escape back to his apartment with the minivan. Scott Hunter would come and pick him up, probably, but that's fucking mortifying, and Shane also begrudgingly hears Rozanov's voice in his head chirping *it's past his bedtime, Hollander, very important for the elderly to get enough sleep*.

Just as he's about to head back downstairs in search of the team, the stool at his left gets occupied, someone's knee nudging against his. Shane turns his head straight into an exhale of cigarette smoke and tries not to cough.

"Shane Hollander," a man says, slim shoulders and a lithe torso, buttons of his printed shirt undone nearly to his ribs. His accent is thick, thicker than Rozanov's, but he recognizes his own name fairly easily.

"That's me," he agrees lamely.

The man takes another slow drag of his cigarette and then uses the ash tray on the bar to stub it out, pink lips curving into a tight grin.

"Yes, it is. Sasha," he offers, extending a hand through the wisps of smoke. Shane shakes it, and the smile starts to look more like a smirk. "Looking for someone specific?"

Shane rubs at the back of his neck, glancing around. "You, um. You wouldn't happen to know if Ilya Rozanov is here, would you?" he asks. "I was—he offered to show me around."

The lie slips out without much thought. It makes sense, surely. They're on Rozanov's home turf, after all. It makes sense that he would have offered to show a fellow player around while they're visiting.

Still, the look on Sasha's face makes him sweat.

"I am sure he did," he murmurs, leaning an elbow on the bar and into Shane's space. "You are close with Ilya, then?"

"We're friends, I guess. Are you—do you know him?"

"Everyone knows him," Sasha dismisses, examining his nails. "But yes. I have known Ilya since we were young."

Oh. “Really?”

“Mm.” He drops his hand suddenly, puts it on Shane’s shoulder instead. Squeezes. “Let me buy you a drink, hm? In place of our good friend Ilya Rozanov.”

Shane shakes his head, subtly trying to pull away. “I don’t really drink during the season.”

“Ah, but you are finished now with everything that you came here for. *Da?*” He’s already leaning over to get the bartender’s attention.

“You keep up with hockey?” Shane asks.

“When there is something worth watching,” he says over his shoulder with a smile. “Just one drink. We will put on Ilya’s tab. He will be angry and it will be very funny.”

“Is he coming? Tonight?”

Sasha’s head tilts, eyes narrowing slightly. The bartender sidles up to him, and Shane watches the curve of Sasha’s spine as he extends himself over the bar to speak to them. It’s too loud to hear what he’s ordering, and squinting through the smoke is only making Shane’s head hurt worse. It might be the beginnings of a migraine, he thinks bitterly. He pulls out his phone again to check it. Still no signal, no texts or calls.

A drink is set down in front of him, not dissimilar to the kind he’s seen Ilya cradle between two lax fingers. The image hits him somewhere tender, like a bruise.

“Just one,” Shane acquiesces, accepting it. “Uh. Thanks.” He takes a single, small sip and tries not to outwardly grimace at the strength. “So, how do you and Rozanov—?”

“We grew up together. Our parents were close.” Sasha pauses, snorts, and traces a finger around the rim of his own drink. Shane eyes the slope of his nose, the glistening divot of a piercing in his ear. “Well, our fathers, anyway.”

“Oh. Did you play hockey, too?”

He laughs. “No. But my father was his coach for many years until he left Russia.”

Shane freezes. *My coach’s son, back in Russia.*

What are the *fucking* odds? His stomach turns. Maybe the drink had been a good idea after all. He tilts it to his lips, takes several swallows.

“Oh.”

Their knees touch again, and Sasha looks at him from underneath thick, dark lashes as he takes a slow sip of his own drink. His lips are wet when he sets it back down, and Shane glances desperately around them again, searching fruitlessly for a familiar face.

“You say that very much. *Oh.*”

He keeps his eyes on his drink. “Sorry.”

“Do not be. Is very cute,” Sasha tells him. “You speak French, *da*? I have seen your interviews.”

“From Quebec, a bit, yeah.”

“Tell me if you understand this,” Sasha says, swaying closer with tilted lips. “*On serait plus à l’aise sur le canapé, non? On peut attendre Ilya ensemble.*” “We would be more comfortable on the sofa, no? We can wait for Ilya together.”

It’s a relatively easy sentence, and Shane sets his drink down when he realizes it’d taken him a little too long to translate it in his head. He blinks hard to clear the smoke from his eyes, but it seems to cling this time.

But. He’d said Rozanov was coming.

“*Je suppose que nous pouvons,*” “I guess we can,” Shane hesitates.

Sasha grins then, slipping off of his stool, and grabs both of their drinks.

“*Bon garçon,*” “Good boy.”

The words make Shane stumble slightly as he follows him through the club. He isn’t always the best at understanding when people are toying with him about something but he’s been in enough locker rooms to understand tones, facial expressions, the layer of something *else* even if he can’t name it.

He really can’t name it right now. Most of his focus is going into watching his own feet as the lights go from strobes to something so dim he can hardly see in front of him anymore as Sasha leads them toward a dark, smoke-filled corner. The music is slightly less loud here, but Shane’s head pounds all the same.

Instinctively, he pats his pocket for his phone. He’d grabbed it off the bar, he knows, slipped it inside his jacket. But he can’t feel it now.

Sasha comes to a stop at a dark crimson sofa, the old velvet peeling up at the corners. It dips underneath his weight when Sasha drops down onto it, and Shane hovers, feet away.

“Actually, I should—I should really find my team,” he says, tongue thick in his mouth. “They’ll be looking for me.”

Sasha waves a hand at him. “You have only been here less than an hour. Sit down. You should at least finish your drink. You are very polite Canadian, no?”

There it is, Shane thinks. Something underneath the words, in the tone. Something that slithers up his back and makes his hair stand. But Sasha holds out an expectant hand and cocks a brow, and Shane’s legs bend and dump him down onto the empty seat without his permission. He wonders briefly about the last time he’d had something to eat. The alcohol must have hit him particularly hard.

Tactical and insistent, Sasha slides up onto the cushion beside him, pushes at Shane's shoulder until he's leaning back against the seat. He'll sit here until he sobers up, he reasons, and then he'll go.

And then Sasha pushes the drink into his hand again.

"You are very pretty," he tells Shane, knees folded, touching Shane's thigh. Shane can feel his breath.

"Thanks," he says, automatic.

"Is no wonder Rozanov likes you." The curved edges of Sasha's fingernails drift over the back of his neck. "He has always liked pretty things."

Shane stiffens. This is—what the fuck is he doing here? He should have left ages ago, he should have...

"But he gets bored very quickly. Surely you have noticed."

Boring, his mind supplies easily. *You are so boring, Hollander*. He blinks hard, shakes his head to clear the memory. Tries to turn when Sasha pushes the cup to his mouth again, but some of it gets in anyway.

"Probably shouldn't talk about someone who's not here to defend themselves," Shane mutters.

"Mm. I think you are right. Especially when *you* are here and so much more interesting."

The fingers at his neck slip down, soft knuckles dipping just beneath the collar of his shirt. Shane's body tries to tense again but he finds that he can't, his muscles uncooperative. He goes to put the glass in his lap down on the table in front of them, and only watches his fingers twitch against his leg.

"I'm not—I don't—"

"Relax," Sasha whispers, rubbing at his shoulder. "You are so tense, Shane Hollander. He has not fucked it out of you yet?"

Shane's blood runs cold. The club sways around him when he turns his head.

"What?"

"Just making conversation," Sasha smiles innocently. "*C'est un amant généreux, n'est-ce pas?*" "He is a generous lover, isn't he?"

"Stop," he mutters, unsure if it's in English or French. The shift between languages makes the pounding of his head worse. Shane manages to get a hand into his hair and tugs weakly at the root to ground himself, but it only feels like dull sparks, like his nervous system is separated from the sensation of his own fingers. "Where's Rozanov? You said he was coming. I'm not —"

A cold hand slips under his collar now, touching skin, and Shane thinks he might be sick.

“I want Rozanov,” he slurs, eyes heavy. He tries to get his feet under him and get up, but he only ends up swaying sideways into the arm of the sofa, caught in the space between.

Sasha gives him a blurry smile, and Shane only distantly feels the fingers stroking his cheek, the slight pinch of his hair looped around a digit.

”Don’t we all, *kotenok*. ”kitten.”

Something glows from Sasha’s breast pocket, vibrating—Shane’s phone, he thinks distantly—and Shane moves toward it without thinking.

His cheek aches when it hits the sharp bone of Sasha’s knee, his body unnaturally loose and mind too cottony to think. *Fuck*, he tries to say.

He passes out instead.

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There are very few people who would consider Ilya a martyr, but he feels somewhat like one as he sits by the tall window and inhales, flicking ash out onto the dirt somewhere beneath.

He is tired of this house. Tired of this family. Tired of pretending that he does not want the things he wants.

None of this matters, of course. Ilya is not in a position to leave permanently. And even if he were, he doubts that he could. He has always been soft at his core. They know this. It is why he still comes home at all.

The quiet is suffocating, but there isn’t any noise Ilya can think of that wouldn’t make him more nauseous. He really, honestly does not think about Hollander all the time.

But he is right now.

His phone sits wedged underneath his thigh, and if he opened it, it would show him the same screen he’d been staring at earlier until it went dark. *Hey! U doing ok?* As if he and Hollander are *friends*. As if Ilya doesn’t know what the space behind his teeth tastes like, as if he doesn’t see the malleable bend of Hollander’s body underneath his hands every time he closes his eyes.

It isn’t *that* often. It’s not.

He doesn't know why the text makes him so angry. He is angry in general, and he thinks he has every reason to be—the loss he'd taken on the ice had not *stayed* on the ice. Ilya was not foolish enough to believe that it would. It sunk into the bone, seeped through his skin, clinging to him like a thick winter coat. Like it's all anyone sees in any room he's been in since it happened; he'd lost, and now he cannot win.

His shame is either too little or too big for the wrong reason. His apologies are called excuses. His reasons fall on deaf, indifferent ears that had decided what to hear a long time ago. Ilya opens his mouth and his father hears a child choking on a grief too big to swallow, sees a son that could never quite fill the shoes he was supposed to.

Ilya hates it just as much. But he can't change it. He has tried.

And now he's fucking *tired*. He's tired and he's thinking about Hollander, about how *nice* it must be to go home to a family that does not hate him, but even then Ilya can't manage to summon the anger he's searching for. It isn't Hollander's fault that he doesn't understand.

That is why Ilya cannot answer his text. Why he'd made Hollander walk away from him. He can have Hollander only in certain, secret ways, and this—this *caring* will not go well for either of them. Hollander is used to being treated nicely. Ilya is an outlier, and that makes him intriguing. But that will fade, and then Hollander will not care anymore, or he will be angry, and Ilya will be the villain for him too.

Ilya raises the cigarette to his lips again. Inhales. He does not like the idea of being a villain in Hollander's story, but he thinks maybe it is already too late for that.

His phone buzzes from underneath his thigh again, and Ilya huffs and ignores it. He knows it will not be Sveta, and she is likely the only person he could handle talking to right now. The smoke dissipates. The cold night air stings his skin. Like a machine, he lifts the cigarette, repeats.

The phone buzzes again, angry with Ilya for ignoring the notification. Ilya squares his jaw and stares into the endless dark outside.

He makes it another couple of minutes before he has to see if it's Hollander again. If he's awake for some reason, alone, maybe, just like Ilya is, thinking of him too.

Even still, his chest does something warm and terrible when he sees the familiar outline of *Jane - 2 messages* on his screen. Six minutes ago. Ilya presses on the notification, and the phone unlocks to the thread.

Underneath Hollander's *Hey! U doing ok?* from before, there's now a picture and another text. He sits up, puts out his cigarette and pulls the phone to his face.

Sure you have not changed your mind about coming out? the message says. Ilya scrolls up to the photograph above it, brows pulling into a furrow.

He stops cold when he sees it, slightly blurry but easily Hollander's face in the middle. Bathed in pale colored lights, head tilted back, eyes closed, mouth twisted into a slack frown.

He's slumped over to the side, cheek wrinkled with the pressure.

And there, in the corner, cropped so that Ilya can only see the edge of his sharp jaw and a pristine smirk, is fucking *Sasha*.

Ilya's body moves on autopilot. He pulls his clothes on and takes the staircase twice at a time uncaring of his volume throughout the house, already fumbling for the keys to whatever car is nearest.

It is no longer Hollander's pleased smile he sees when he blinks but his too-lax shoulders, the color blotchy on his face, helpless.

Ilya is supposed to feel helpless here. Hollander is *not*. That was the whole fucking point.

He pulls up the photo again while the engine idles, zooming in on the back of it. He recognizes enough to know where they are, at least. And if he knows *Sasha*, they'll be waiting somewhere deliberately meant to catch Ilya's attention.

He tosses the phone into the passenger seat and presses on the gas, his knuckles white on the wheel.

He'd been angry before. Now, he's furious.

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"I nakonets, on pokazyvayet svoyo litso," "And finally he shows his face," *Sasha* says when Ilya tosses open the door to the restroom, letting it bang on creaking hinges.

Ilya ignores him and the fact that he's fucked *Sasha* on the same cabinet he's lounging on now, looking bored as he watches Ilya rush past him toward the open stall.

"Hollander," he says, dropping to his knees beside him. Ilya presses a hand against his curved back, wet through with sweat, and then reaches for his face. "Hollander. Look at me. Can you hear?"

His head lolls in Ilya's grip, vomit smeared on his chin and eyes unfocused. He groans, low and confused, and Ilya curses as he reaches for the toilet paper to wipe off his mouth and then flushes it all down the toilet.

Hollander jolts forward after a moment like he might retch again, and Ilya keeps his face from hitting the filthy porcelain, wiping the hair back from his brow.

"Chto ty yemu dal?" "What the fuck did you give him?" he snarls at *Sasha*.

Across the bathroom, *Sasha* leans against the mirror behind the sinks, swinging his crossed ankles. He rolls his eyes.

“Rasslab'sya, Il'ya. On byl takim napryazhyonnym. Ya prosto pokazyval yemu, kak mozžno nemnogo poveselit'sya?” “Relax, Ilya. He was being so uptight. I was just showing him how to have some fun.”

Ilya's jaw grates. *“On bez soznaniya, Sasha.”* “He is unconscious, Sasha.”

As if to prove his point, Hollander whimpers a little and then sways to the side, falling right into Ilya's chest. Ilya grabs him instinctively to steady him, waiting a moment longer to make sure that he isn't going to be sick again before he gets them the *fuck* out of here.

Sasha lifts a shoulder, lower lip jutted outward. *“Ne moya vina, chto on ne mozhet s etim spravit'sya.”* “Not my fault he is such a lightweight.”

Ilya glares at him, more angry than he has ever been with him before. They have always played games, always done this; Sasha toeing the line of too much to get his attention, Ilya giving in because Sasha was easy and familiar and, for a long time, the sex was good and worth it.

It is not worth it anymore. He has hardly thought of Sasha these last few years, nor their friendship that had fizzled out sometime when Ilya had realized it would never be safe, not really.

Sasha has always been a risk. Ilya just does not enjoy those so much these days.

“On sprashival o tebe, ty znayesh'.” “He was asking for you, you know.”

Ilya presses his fingertips into the space between Hollander's shoulder blades and does not look up.

“My v Rossii.” “We are in Russia,” he drawls, carefully detached. *“On, veroyatno, znal, chto vy nakachal yego narkotikami, i dumal o kom-to iz svoikh znakomykh.”* “He was probably aware that you had drugged him and thought of whoever made the most sense.”

“Ne bud' grebanyim idiotom, Il'ya,” “Don't be a fucking idiot, Ilya,” he bites. *“On pozval tebya, i ty pribezhala yemu na pomoshch'. Eto tak mило. Deystvitel'no.”* “He asked for you, and you come running to his rescue. It is sweet. Really.”

Hollander makes another soft noise and turns his face into Ilya's throat. He swallows and presses a hand to the back of Hollander's neck, finds Sasha over his shoulder.

“Ty nichego ne znayesh'.” “You know nothing.”

“O, razve ne znayu.” “Oh, but don't I?”

His ankles slow and then stop, uncrossing as he pushes himself off the countertop and onto his feet. He leans back against the tiled wall beside it instead, crossing his arms and looking down at Ilya.

“Ya ochen' populyaren v nashi dni, teper', kogda ya ne zhivu v tvoey teni. Lyudi khotyat uslyshat', chto ya khochu skazat'. U menya yest' svyazi,” “I am very popular these days, now

that I don't live in your shadow. People want to hear what I have to say. I have connections," he goes on with a sniff, staring at his nails.

"I u menya vse yeshche yest' nomer telefona tvoyego ottsa." "And I still have your father's phone number." Ilya delights in the flicker of fear that unfolds over Sasha's face. *"Tak chto, yesli ty khochesh' i dal'she imet' vozmozhnost' oplachivat' svoi vecherinki i narkotiki, ya dumayu, tebe sleduyet udalit' eto foto i podumat' o tom, chtoby khot' raz v zhizni derzhat' svoj grebanny rot na zamke."* "So if you want to keep being able to pay for your parties and your drugs, I think you should consider keeping your fucking mouth closed for once in your life."

He turns away again, getting a hand underneath Hollander's arms to put them over Ilya's shoulders, Ilya holding onto his waist as he slowly levers them up off the floor. He's shivering now, fever-heat giving way to a cold sweat. *Good*, Ilya thinks, relieved. Maybe he's already gotten rid of whatever Sasha had given him.

As he watches, Sasha mumbles something underneath his breath and laughs. He's shaking his head when Ilya glances at him.

"Chto?" "What?" he snaps.

"Ty by kogda-nibud' zashchishchal menya podobnym obrazom? Ran'she?" "Would you ever have defended me like this? Back then?"

Sasha won't look at him now, but Ilya sees the line of lip tremble before it flattens into nothing again.

"Ty vsegda zabotilsya o sebe sam." "You have always taken care of yourself."

"A kakoy u menya byl vybor?" "What choice did I have?" he scoffs, eyes blazing.

"Ty sam sdelal etot vybor," "This was your choice," Ilya says, lifting Hollander further against him. *"Ty znal, chto ya pridu. Ty prinyal eto resheniye, potomu chto ne mozhesh' ostavat'sya bez vnimaniya bol'she dvukh minut."* "You knew that I would come. You made this decision, because you cannot handle going without attention for more than two minutes."

His gaze turns glassy. *"Idi nahuy, Ilya."* "Fuck you, Ilya."

It is not the first time Ilya's heard it. It will not be the last.

Or maybe it will be, from Sasha, at least.

"Ne svyazyvaysya so mnoy bol'she, Sasha. Yesli tebe yest' chto mne skazat', mozhesh' peredat' eto cherez Svetu." "Do not contact me again, Sasha. If you have anything to say to me, it can go through Sveta."

Shifting Hollander to one side, Ilya tries to wrap an arm around his middle and hold him more like someone might if they were carrying a drunken teammate. Russia is much more discreet and Ilya doubts anyone will snap a photo, but he can hear Hollander's voice inside of his head: *better safe than sorry*.

He's pretty much dead on his feet but he perks up just a little when Ilya starts walking toward the door, his hand twitching where it loosely grips the back of Ilya's shirt, his cheek on Ilya's shoulder. Ilya tugs him closer encouragingly.

"Ya nadeyus', chto on togo stoit." "I hope he's worth it."

Ilya says nothing for a long moment as they get to the exit, and then pauses to look at Sasha a final time from the threshold.

"Stoit." "He is."

The darkness of the club swallows them whole out on the floor again, and Ilya knows the layout well. He keeps them to the dimmer corridors and the lesser known smoking areas until they get to a side exit, then uses a shoulder to push out into the night air toward where he'd parked in his rush to get inside.

Hollander is shivering again by the time they make it there, Ilya settling him into the passenger side and buckling him in. When he gets in himself he cranks the heat up, uncaps a water bottle he'd had in the cup holder and lifts it to Hollander's mouth.

The coolness of it gets him to come back a little more, his throat working automatically to swallow some. Ilya gives him only a couple of small sips, just enough to get the taste off of his tongue before he pulls it back and caps it again, eager to get somewhere more private.

Moaning lightly, Hollander blinks, coughs. "Roz—?"

"I am here," Ilya says, touching his face. His own voice wavers, more relieved than he should be. "You are safe, Hollander."

Unaware, Hollander presses further into his hand, and Ilya strokes a thumb over his cheek as the color begins to return to it.

"Missed you," he slurs into Ilya's palm with a hum.

His lashes flutter as he slips into a much more relaxed sort of unconsciousness, this time with the barest hint of a smile on his lips. Ilya touches it with his thumb, and then sighs and forces his hand away.

"Ya tozhe skuchal po tebe," "I missed you too," he whispers.

Hollander is already fast asleep. Ilya drives.

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He goes to Sveta's, because he knows she isn't there for the night and it is the closest place his family does not have access to.

He does what he can for Hollander but it isn't much, not until he can stand on his own for a shower or not gag around a toothbrush. Still, Ilya tries, wiping him down with cool rags, keeping the lights off, changing him out of his sweat and sick covered clothes to ones he's kept of his own here at Sveta's. He thinks Hollander will be very hungover when he wakes up since he does not drink during the season, but he hopes that most of it left his system there in the bathroom before they'd left.

Before Ilya had gotten to him. Where he wouldn't have been in the first place if Ilya had answered his fucking text.

He wants to raid Sveta's cabinet for a drink of his own. He forces himself not to.

Instead he lays a half-cleaned up Hollander on top of Sveta's sheets—another place Ilya has fucked someone who isn't Hollander—and waits for him to wake up. This is what he had hoped to avoid. In Boston, in Montreal, in wherever the fuck else, Ilya can be anything and anyone he wants to be.

Here, in Russia, he is told who he is. The past versions of himself stain the walls, everywhere he goes, every place he looks. He cannot hide from it. He hadn't wanted Hollander to see, to *know*.

But he supposes it is too late for that now, too.

He wallows for a while as Hollander sleeps, lost in his own head until there's a huff and a groan.

"Rozanov?" he rasps, barely able to lift his head off the pillow.

"Here." He pushes the pills into Hollander's hand, reaches next for the disgusting little wellness shot Sveta keeps on hand for bad hangovers. The trash can is beside the bed, but Ilya hopes they will not have to use it. "Pain killers for your head, drink for stomach."

Hollander downs both of them easily, and Ilya's own stomach churns at the thought of him accepting something the same way from Sasha. Ilya backs away, makes himself sit back down in the chair.

"Thanks," he croaks, sitting up slightly against the headboard now. Then, "Shit, I need to text the guys."

Ilya points to the nightstand. "Phone is there. Charging."

"Uh." Hollander squints through the dark, looking around in the streetlight coming in through the blinds, but he makes no move to reach for it. "Where are we right now?"

"This is Sveta's apartment," Ilya tells him. "My friend, Svetlana. She is not staying tonight. We should be safe here. Is best I could do."

"Thank you," Hollander says after a moment. Ilya can feel his eyes, up until the moment he shoves his palms up against them. "I'm—fuck. I'm sorry you had to come get me, I—"

“No,” Ilya cuts him off.

“Yes,” he insists. “You didn’t even want to answer my texts and now you’re stuck taking care of me. I’m—I’m *sorry*, Rozanov.”

Bile sits in Ilya’s own throat, his hands itching to move, to run, to fix. But there is nowhere to go, no one to fight but himself.

“You went there for me,” he says quietly. “Looking for me.”

Hollander waits a moment. “Yeah.”

“Why.”

“You obviously weren’t okay.”

“Is not your problem.”

Ilya braces himself for the shift, for Hollander’s tone to rise, for his words to get meaner, sharper, for him to dole out Ilya’s punishment accordingly. He needs it, almost.

“If we were back in Montreal,” Hollander asks instead, “wouldn’t you have done the same for me?”

Not in the same way. Ilya would have texted him many times, annoyed him until he finally snapped and then would have helped Hollander pick up the pieces—whether that meant fucking him or making himself into a punching bag. He would have been whatever Hollander needed him to be.

Yes. The answer is yes.

But Ilya cannot say this either, so he sniffs and glances at the slats covering the window. “I am sorry. About Sasha.”

“Me too,” Hollander sighs. “He said he knew you, but I didn’t—I didn’t realize how until after he bought me the drink.” It’s quiet for a minute, and then he abruptly sits up on the bed. “*Fuck.*”

Ilya tenses. “What is it?”

“The drugs, he—that’s going to show up on our physicals, Rozanov. I can’t—if they see it and think I took something, they’ll—”

“You did not *take something*,” Ilya interjects firmly. “You did not choose that. When medicine has made your head better and you are looking less like you will be sick again, we will call team doctor and tell them what happened and that you are safe now.”

Hollander relaxes, but only a little. “What if they don’t believe me?”

“I will say that I was there. That I saw and helped you get back to hotel.”

Even in the low light, he can make out Hollander's frown. "They'll have more questions. You shouldn't be pulled into this mess."

He shrugs. "Is my mess. Only fair."

"Rozanov..."

Silence fills the space between them again, Ilya looking out the window and Hollander looking at him. He can't listen to that tone of voice, doesn't want Hollander's pity and yet cannot handle this—something gentler, an offering, either. Ilya blinks hard at the blinds and holds himself still.

Eventually, Hollander sits back against the headboard again and sighs.

"Look. If you really don't want to talk, I can get a ride back to the hotel and you don't have to see me again until the next time we play each other," he says. "But also. I'm here, we have an apartment to ourselves and at least several hours before I can start calling people and explaining things."

He waits for a moment, and Ilya can see him in his peripherals rubbing a thumb across his own wrist, a nervous habit.

More quietly, he adds, "I'm a pretty good listener, if you want to get anything off your chest."

Ilya lets his eyes fall shut. He takes one, two, three breaths before he opens them again.

"I do not feel like talking," he says, gravel in his throat. "But you can stay. For a little while."

It is more than he's ever dared to offer here before. And still he's hyper aware of the risks, of the things he should be doing and isn't. Of the *guilt*, thick and sour in his gut, inescapable.

I cannot give you more, Ilya translates inside of his head. *But I can give you this. If you want it.*

Hollander shifts on the bed.

"Okay." Then, "Will you come here?"

Ilya drags himself up from the chair and goes, helpless in a new way. Sveta's bed is warm and familiar and Hollander is a luxury inside of it, a soft place to land when Ilya lays his head down. Hollander has had an unsettling night, he tells himself. This is for him. It is not for Ilya.

But it feels sort of like it is, or at least that maybe they both need it, when they meet in the middle with Hollander's head at his collarbone and his arm around Ilya's waist. He is solid and safe and wearing Ilya's clothes, and just until morning, Ilya bargains, this is something he can have. That *they* can have.

Hollander sighs, small and satisfied, his fingertips warm against Ilya's ribs.

Ilya closes his eyes.

End Notes

WARNINGS: sasha drugs shane with an unspecified substance (but shane is okay), mild depictions of shane not wanting to be touched by sasha and trying to get away but not being able to (though no assault happens, it's still uncomfortable), mentions of vomit

all my thanks once again to A for the help with translations! <3

i'm on tumblr @ anincompletelist ! x

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