

to be yours

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to be yours

by [LunarMoonstone](#)

Summary

With a smirk, he extends his hand to encircle Ilya's wrist, his thumb grazing the tattoo's edge, having committed the placement to memory.

He looks ahead into the buzzing sea of microphones, cameras, lights, and reporters. The image they must make on camera is undoubtedly counterproductive. Ilya towering behind him, encasing him between his arms on each side of the table, glaring into the room of reporters that had dared to attack their integrity.

"I believe the last question was about possible disciplinary actions against us?"

In which, following his final Boston game before moving to Canada, Ilya flaunts his new tattoo during an interview. Years later, the world finally learns who it really stands for.

Notes

This is for that niche of fics where Hollanov get a tattoo for each other. Most of those stories include drunken mishaps and are set during their hook-up era, which i love, but i wanted to give my contribution of a more subtle, intentional tattoo during their dating era!

If you like these stories, check out: "Lily hearts Jane" by photographer_of_thoughts ! It's amazingly funny and hot and deals with shanes internal struggles so well!

Chapter 1: Prolouge

Chapter Notes

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

Boston 2018

“ROZANOV!”

“Rozanov! Over here!”

“Ilya! Ilya! Just one question!”

Shane squirmed in his seat on his parent's couch, anticipation bubbling in him as he watched the reporters on the TV scramble to shove their mics into the frame as Ilya slowly approached them. He was dying to see his post-game interview, as if he just hadn't spent his evening watching the game with his parents and tracking Ilyas's every move on the ice.

“He really should put on a shirt,” his mom sighed next to him.

“He’s too much of an asshole for that. Show off,” Shane muttered without any heat, his eyes glued to the TV as his glorious, wet, shirtless boyfriend finally stepped into the frame. God, he was gorgeous. Shane was so in love he barely registered his parents' laughter at his quip.

“Rozanov! Your last game in Boston, and you’re going out with a win and not one but two hat tricks scored! Are emotions running high?” a reporter asked.

Ilya blinked from the mic to the camera, processing the words before giving a self-assured shrug, cocky grin on his face.

“Yes,” he just replies.

All Hollanders huff a laugh at the answer. What would have been indignation at such behavior years ago was now affectionate amusement.

“Are you sad to be leaving the Bears?” a woman off to the right asked, turning Ilyas's attention to her.

Shane sat up a little straighter, awaiting the answer curiously. Their plan was set. Ilya had already found a house and signed his contract, and soon Shane would be able to fill the void in his chest that he had been unable to explain for years until he finally understood it was only due to Ilya's absence.

And yet.

There was this small, torturous part of his brain that told him it was all just a fantasy on his part that he had pushed too far. That Ilya would still change his mind. Realize he would have to give up too much for too little in return.

For only Shane in return.

Was he worthy of such a great sacrifice? Even if all of Ilya's words and actions repeatedly confirmed his decision, his brain told him he wasn't.

On TV, Ilya appeared to ponder the previous question, putting his hands on his waist and highlighting his powerful, glistening arms.

13 days and Shane would be engulfed by those arms again. God, he felt like he was dying a little each day he wasn't.

"Boston is good team that has always treated me well. I will be...sad to go, yes. Will be leaving good people behind. But it's time for a new beginning, so..." Ilya finally answered with another shrug, though he couldn't contain his private smile at the end of his statement.

Despite the shame that lingered in the back of his mind, Shane felt a sense of relief at Ilyas's admission. However, Shane could see that Ilyas was excited to begin his new life by the way his arrogant smile had transformed into an almost ecstatic grin. His boyfriend's expression reflected their new life together.

Even though the information was not yet public, the reporters persisted in pressuring Ilya to provide the precise location of his resignation. As he slumped against the couch with his arms folded in front of his chest, Shane was unable to stop the tiny smugness that overcame him. Not only did he know why Ilya had decided to trade, but the relationship was also the reason for it. It felt incredible.

"Finally, in the second period, during the power play between you and your teammate, did you-

As the reporter began her question, Ilya had lifted his arm to scratch at his head, and something on his wrist flashed on the screen, immediately catching the reporter's as well as Shane's attention.

"A new tattoo, Rozanov?" someone asked with a fond laugh.

Shane huffed. He tried to convince himself that he wasn't a controlling lover, but he disliked it when Ilya did things without his knowledge. They talked every night; why hasn't he brought it up? It was a significant shift in his appearance, which Shane would have to bear for the rest of his life.

At that notion, he lost all of his indignation. In any case, his tattoos made Ilya look even hotter.

Ilyas was still scratching the back of his scalp, so his head covered the new tattoo. Ilya's smug look returned at the reporter's attention, this time much more so than before, if possible.

"Hm," the Russian just hummed, catching the eyes of the reporters. Ever so slowly, he pulled his arm back, his smirk growing with the attention of the room on him. His eyes finally

flickered to the camera, smirking directly into it as he put his arm next to his head, his hand closing into a fist.

Shane wasn't seeing right. He couldn't be.

Next to him, his mother gasped.

"Is that-...?" she breathes. On the armchair next to the sofa, Shane's father let out a low whistle.

Shane's eyes were transfixed on the screen, where his boyfriend was showing off his new tattoo to the world. The letter "S" on the inside of his wrist.

"Would that be for someone special? Perhaps the reason for your trade?" the same reporter asked, all-knowing with a laugh.

Ilya smiled at him, leaning down into his mic.

"Is for my lover, yes," he said before glancing back up into the camera with a wink.

"Asshole" was Shane's knee-jerk reaction. He had prohibited that word. However, the tears in his eyes and his voice cracking halfway took out any venom from the insult.

"Oh my," his mother next to him whispered, her voice similarly impacted.

Shane closed his eyes once and exhaled deeply. Though his parents hadn't given him any cause to doubt their approval of Ilya or their plans for the future, his mother's astonishment at Ilya's public exhibition felt like the final step Shane had been waiting for.

Not wanting to miss a second, he opened his eyes again; the image on the screen was slightly blurry until he aggressively blinked away the tears.

"So it's safe to say wherever you're going next is for your mystery girl?" another reporter asked. Ilya just shrugged both shoulders, neither confirming nor denying the statement.

"She must be quite something," a male reporter laughed. Ilya blinked at him before lowering himself down to speak into the microphones again.

"I wish to keep them and my life private. And I will not answer any questions about them in future," he stated clearly.

Shane's heart swelled at feeling so...*protected*, even though it was a typical media response. He hoped he didn't appear to his parents as tremendously tender as he felt at that moment, as he smiled softly through his unshed tears.

"How come?" the same reporter inquired. Ilya furrowed his brow and looked the reporter's frame up and down behind the camera with critical eyes.

"Should wish for privacy not be respected just because?" he asks incredulously. Shane heard his dad huff a laugh while he and his mother sighed simultaneously.

"I am in a good mood today because of win, so I tell you who the tattoo is for. Just don't ask me anything in the future. It would interfere with both our careers and life," he elaborates, shaking his head carelessly afterwards before pushing a damp curl that had fallen out of place from his eyes.

"So she's someone with a high-profile career as well?"

Ilya laughed at the question, Shane mirroring him on the couch, before he leaned down into the mics again.

"If there's no more questions about my game, I will go now," he states firmly before winking into the camera one last time.

He turns around, beginning to step away when another reporter scrambles for his attention.

"Just one more! How did she react to the tattoo?"

The other reporters chuckle at the playful inquiry, and Ilya slowly turns around again, a Cheshire Cat smile on his face. He strolls back to the reporter who posed the inquiry before leaning ever so slowly into the microphone. At the action, his necklace is pulled forward, drawing attention to the water droplet trickling down and the mouthwatering veins in his neck.

Shane really needed to get out of here after this. He would *not* jerk off in his parents' bathroom like he was 14 again.

No...he'd do it at home. Like an adult.

If he made it, that is. If not, there was always that spot just off the road into the woods where you could park behind the trees. After Ilya visited them briefly two months ago during some off time between games, Shane's parents insisted on picking him up from the airport so they could all meet up here and have dinner together. He and Ilya could barely contain themselves after weeks apart and found the spot on their way to the cottage. Shane's was twitching in his briefs at just the memory.

He held his breath as Ilya turned to face the camera once more. Shane could tell right away from the expression in his eyes that whatever words Ilya would say next would be aimed solely at him.

"I have not told them yet, but I know they are watching."

He then lifted his arm again, giving the camera a clear view of the tattoo.

"This is for you, *lyubimiy*." he turned his wrist once more and pressed the tattoo to his lips, giving it a gentle kiss while keeping eye contact with the camera.

Shane's face was *burning*, but he was also on the verge of full on sobbing from being so publicly chosen, the conflicting emotions overwhelming him.

"What does that mean?" his mother asked him, her head turning from her TV to him.

At her attention, Shane clenched his jaw, not wanting his parents to see how overcome he was.

On the armchair, his dad snorted, saving him from a reply.

“I think we can infer that from context,” he said meaningfully, nodding his head towards Shane, where he was still staring straight ahead at the TV, refusing to meet their eyes and letting his tears fall.

“Oh honey,” his mother breathed, reaching out to run a hand down his arms. He closed his eyes, clenching them shut to press the tears away and let his mother keep soothing him without leaning into the touch.

“I am...” she began, and at her voice catching, Shane was helpless to whip his head around. His mother getting emotional was so rare, and panic surged up inside of him. Yet when he saw her expression, so full of love, her eyes just as shiny as Shane’s, he knew there were no negative emotions in her.

“...so glad that you found someone who loves you this much,” she continued, a small smile on her face. She looks over to David and Shane follows her line of sight, seeing his father smile warmly and lean forward to press a hand to Shane’s knee.

He shudders, taking in a shaky breath while nodding down at his lap, too overwhelmed for words.

His parents squeeze him at the same time, and he shuts his eyes again.

“My, she’s sure to be surprised. Are you planning on seeing her after this?”

Their heads turn towards the TV again, where Ilya is still standing in front of the cameras, holding his tattooed wrist in the opposite hand, his thumb gently running over the lines of the S. At the question, he smirks and raises his eyebrows suggestively.

“I’ll be sure to collect my reward,” he says, leaning slightly into the mic again and doing what Shane could best describe as eyefucking him through the camera.

“For win and tattoo,” he drawls out, shaking his head playfully, his mouth opening to show off his tongue pressing against his bottom lip.

Shane groans, his eyes closing in embarrassment. Ilya knew he was with his parents, fucking hell.

On his right, his father coughs awkwardly, and he hears his mother click her tongue. Shane refused to open his eyes.

“Even if he’s still kind of an asshole,” his mother eventually adds, making Shane erupt a loud laugh from his chest.

“You fucking *asshole*! You knew I was watching with my parents!”

Shane hears Ilya huff a laugh over the line, and he settles further into his headboard, his arm coming stubbornly over his middle while he holds his phone up with the other. It's pressed close enough to his ear that he can hear the faint sound of booming music and chatter in the background on Ilya's end, which fades with the definite clink of a door closing.

"Hm, hello to you too, my love," Ilya says pleasantly. There's no slurring in his speech, but it's slower nonetheless, his accent just a bit thicker, which makes Shane know he's been drinking. Even though it pains him that he can't be there with him, he smiles and hopes that Ilya is enjoying himself.

"I did such a shit show at my parents' place trying to compose myself, fucker," Shane mutters, though it sounds terribly fond more than anything else.

"So you like it?" Ilya simply asks.

Shane breathes in deeply, closing his eyes and recalling the image of his boyfriend, broadcast to the entire world, publicly claiming himself.

The smooth sheets shift against his bare skin as he shuffles a little, adjusting to being half hard already. After enduring dinner with his parents, he had completed his nightly routine and shower after texting Ilya, who replied that he couldn't get out of attending his farewell party to call him. Despite his intense desire to hear his voice or even see him over FaceTime, he had never expected that of him. Based on the impromptu call just before Shane was about to head to bed and the muffled background noise at the beginning of the call, it seemed that Ilya had still wanted to talk despite being out.

"I did. I-...I don't know what to say," Shane replies earnestly, struggling with formulating his emotions.

Ilya was quiet on the other end, and Shane envisioned him standing outside in someone's backyard or patio or whatever and smiling into the night.

"Thank you," Shane eventually said in a quiet voice, hoping it could convey his reverence.

"You didn't have t-"

"I wanted to,"

Shane instantly relaxed at Ilya's reassurance, a small smile forming on his face.

"I love you. So much," he finally whispered into the room, running his hand over his chest to soothe himself from the way he could physically feel Ilya's absence.

"I love you too. I wanted this to show how much," Ilya confessed quietly. Shane lets out a gasp, feeling the threat of tears once more.

"I am glad you like it. Sorry about your parents." Ilya hums, making Shane laugh.

"Don't be. I think if...they didn't think we were serious before, they do now," he confesses

quietly, a small smile forming on his lips.

"I am glad," Ilya just repeats, sounding ever so pleased with himself. Shane adores him.

"My mom expects you for dinner the second you get to Ottawa, though. I am still trying to talk her out of it," he continues fondly.

"Yes, we will have dinner. First I need to eat her son though," Ilya teases.

"Gross," Shane laughs.

There's a slight lull in which Shane is just content to listen to him breathe before Ilya speaks up again, his voice with that tilt he is all too familiar with.

"So how much did you really like tattoo?"

Shane perks up at the change in tone, moving on the blankets as excitement surges through him.

"Are you all alone?" he asks carefully, his breath catching in anticipation.

"Hm, yes. Outside. So tell me. How much?"

Ilya's tone immediately became demanding, and it went right to Shane's dick. He shuffles again, nestling against the backboard before squeezing his covered erection for comfort, groaning with the touch.

He closes his eyes and says, "The next time I see you, I want..." as he imagines seeing Ilya in front of him. Or better still, on top of him, with his hand performing the same movements as Shane's doing right now.

"Yes," Ilya sounds like he's dying for Shane's next words, holding his breath for them.

Shane is so aroused by it that he has to let out a trembling breath to gather himself, squinting his eyes before swallowing. He was never good at this, expressing what he wants in the bedroom. But he knew that Ilya loved it when he did it, that little else got him going like Shane being desperate for him, and *fuck*, did he want to be good for Ilya, 500 miles apart or not.

"I want to go straight to my knees for you." he confesses, pressing harder on himself as he thinks of the feeling of his boyfriend on his tongue. Of strong hands in his hair, tugging on it until he looks up and sees absolute bliss on the face he loves most on this earth, put there by him.

"Fuck. Keep going," Ilya quickly demands. Shane smiles, getting fueled on by his need for him.

"You want more?" he teases.

"Yes," comes the immediate reply

He groans and interrupts himself as he moves his hand to slide his thumb beneath the waistband of his shorts. "I could do more than just...tell you," he murmurs into the line.

"Are you asking for permission to touch yourself, Solnyshko?" Ilya croons.

Shane yips right away, "I don't need your permission."

He then carefully pulls down his underwear, avoiding revealing himself just yet, as he waits. At last, he whispers, "But maybe I want it." He can hear Ilya groaning and uttering a series of Russian profanities on the other end of the line.

"My team is inside. Can see me through stupid fucking glass door. You want to torture me, Hollander," he laments.

"It's not my fault you're not back in your hotel room where we could be doing this together."

Shane actually smiles at the huff Ilya lets out, feeling powerful and giddy at the same time. Even before they had confessed their feelings to one another, having sex with Ilya was always an emotional roller coaster. Now that they were dating, he was laughing more often, and his heart was overflowing with love due to the constant swing between pleasure and affection.

"Please tell me to," he eventually breathes into the speaker when the pressure building up gets too unbearable, finally ridding himself of his last piece of clothing and waiting for his boyfriend's approval.

"Fuck. You sound so wrecked already, baby. So needy for me. So perfect." Ilya purrs, causing Shane to whine.

"God. Yes. Please, go on. Touch yourself for me, darling."

Shane keens at the pet name before finally laying a hand on himself, putting his thumb and pointer finger around the base with the pressure he likes before stroking upwards, arching off the bed.

"I've been hard for you since I saw you walk out to those reporters, asshole," he murmurs, breaking off in a moan as he closes his other fingers around himself.

"Hm, my poor, sweet Shane. So horny for his boyfriend being in love with him," Ilya teases.

"You shouldn't say my name, someone could hear," Shane warns automatically.

"Oh, so you don't want to hear me say your name?" Ilya teases before lowering his voice to continue to say, *"While you're jerking off to your initial on my arm?"*

"Fuck," Shane cries, picking up his pace at the reminder. He must be flush all over from the way he feels like he is on fucking fire even though there is no sheet covering him.

"Yes, yes, good. Keep going, fuck, you sound so good. I'm so fucking hard for you. Should have taken this to the fucking bathroom," Ilya curses, his breathing getting heavier in

combination with Shane's.

Shane huffs a laugh at the image of Ilya aggressively jerking off over the phone while trying to stay quiet so his teammates wouldn't hear him. At that thought, however, a shot of pleasure runs through him, and before he can stop himself, he speaks up,

"Yeah, maybe you should have. Fuck it all and let them hear you moan my name so they know who you belong to. Who that S really stands for," he said, startling himself with such self-assurance.

He hears Ilya groan into the speaker, followed by a loud noise and a new string of Russian curse words. He must have hit something, Shane thinks in the back of his head, as his breath begins coming out in short puffs of air as he digs his heels into the bed while arching up into his fist.

"I got it so you would be with me every day. Never out of my sight or my thoughts, moy lyubimyy" he continued. The statement would have been disproportionately sweet for the situation if it weren't for the dangerous promise his tone held. hane rubbed at his cock's slit while grunting.

"Oh, so this isn't you telling the world *you* belong to *me*, but that *I* belong to *you*?" he whimpers into the speaker.

"Hm, works both ways. Funny how that is," Ilya chuckles.

"Fuck off," he says, laughing. Then, as he feels himself growing closer, he moans into the phone, "I wish I had your hands on me," before flinging his head back into the pillow.

"I love it when you talk dirty to me, sweetheart. More," Ilya all but begs him, sounding as wrecked as Shane was feeling without being touched and just listening to him. Shane grinned. They seldom ever allowed their dynamic to change to the point where Shane was in control, and he was enjoying the rush of power that still came from seeing his letter on him.

"I will let you do whatever you want to me when you come back. I want you to show me that I'm yours. Just as you are mine now," he breathes, moaning at the images running through his head of what Ilya would do to him when they got together again.

"Hm, don't worry. Every time I jerk you off now, you will see your letter on my arm," Ilya promises.

It was that mental image that sent Shane over the edge, and he came with a long, drawn-out moan, the orgasm he had been building up to all evening hitting him full force.

Afterwards, he just laid there, getting his breathing under control and smiling at nothing. Eventually, he noticed the silence on the other line, and he frowned, nuzzling his cheek into the phone as he could nudge the other through the line with the action.

"You still with me, Rozanov?" he asks, chuckling nervously afterwards.

There was another brief silence in which Shane came more back to himself, blinking his shut eyes open in confusion.

“Ilya?”

“*Shane,*”

Shane's breath caught as he heard the promise and danger in Ilya's voice.

“Yes?,” he asked weakly.

“*The next time I see you, I will fold you in half and eat you out until you cry,*”

The way Ilya said it made it sound like a fucking vow, and Shane's only option was to moan at the image while rubbing his hands over his eyes as though he could sear it into his mind.

“Jesus,” he mutters.

“*Is promise,*” Ilya says seriously.

“Yeah, I believe you,” Shane just breathes, feeling like he was set on fire all over again.

“*Hm, you will be so pretty on my tongue. You always are.*”

Shane wriggles and cries into the speaker, begging him to stop while Ilya rushes on, compleply disregarding his already fucked-out state.

“*Gonna make you come untouched, just from my tongue before I even get inside of you, my love. You'll taste so sweet for me.*”

"Oh god," Shane groaned into the speaker, feeling a crushing wave of longing wash over him, pressing him into the bed and making his arm drop uselessly to the side. "12 more days," he whines, gripping the phone closer.

“*Hm, and then you're mine,*”

“I already am,” Shane is quick to say.

He has been for a long time.

Ilya hums pleasantly and speaks up to say something but is interrupted by a loud noise before there's yelling in the background, the noises of music and chatter filtering back in.

“*Rozanov! Are you doing dirty talking your girl over the phone so you can get back to your fucking party, you freak?*”

“*Shut your fucking face up, Cliff!*”

While listening to Cliff and Ilya argue over speakers, Shane flushes at being caught and has to actively remind himself that nobody can see him in his flat.

He gradually murmurs into the speaker, "He's right, you should go back," as a new, settled exhaustion takes hold of him and draws him into sleep, his eyelids drooping heavy.

He would be content to just fall asleep with Ilya on the phone like they had done so many times before, but the other should enjoy his night, even if Shane would miss him the second they hung up. Ilya was silent for a bit before he hummed in agreement, Shane letting the low sound expand in his chest and fill it.

"Say you love me again," Ilya whispered into the speaker.

Shane did.

"That's going to leave a mark, baby"

Shane just grumbles at Ilya's warning before pressing a final kiss to the spot on his chest he had been focused on kissing and biting for the past minutes.

He let his chin rest on Ilya's pec, looking up at him through his lashes and earning a soft smile in return. Ilya's hand had been running through his hair, and he gently scratched at his head.

"We'll be here for the next two weeks, no one will see," Shane defends himself, pressing another kiss to Ilya's chest. He lifts himself up, Ilya meeting him for a quick press of lips before he falls to the side, still keeping himself half draped over his boyfriend, his head resting on his shoulder.

It was their first day at the cottage, and they hadn't stopped touching since he picked up Ilya early from the airport. It was everything Shane had been counting down to.

They sink into a cozy silence, enjoying each other's company rather than falling asleep since it was still too early. Shane hums in response to Ilya's continued petting of his hair, periodically scratching at his skull. He maps out the constellations of freckles he has committed to memory by letting his finger roam arbitrarily across the broad surface of his boyfriend's chest. He eventually let his fingers go from his navel to his chest, passing over his nipple and stopping at his sharp collarbone. He traces the contour there, then reaches over him to run his arm along the outline of his powerful biceps, letting his hand pass over it many times as he dwells in thought.

Ilya turns his head to press a kiss to his temple and then his forehead. Shane meets his eyes, and they exchange a smile and another press of lips.

"Can I see it again?" Shane whispers into the quiet, and Ilya snorts happily.

Wordlessly, he lets his arm lay over his stomach, turning his hand so his wrist is visible to Shane, who immediately brings his fingers over the letter "S" placed just under the pulse point.

They keep it up for a while, Ilya occasionally pressing a kiss to his hair but mostly contenting himself with watching Shane stare at the tattoo while reverently tracing the outline of it with his fingers.

They hadn't had the chance to speak much about it after Ilya's public display; their nightly phone calls were often cut short by other responsibilities and just brief enough to exchange the happenings of their days and eagerness for being together again.

"What did your teammates say about it?" Shane wonders out loud, realizing he had never asked before.

Ilya chuckles, making Shane look up at him.

"What?" he asks when Ilya just keeps on chuckling, a smile forming on his own face at the other's happiness.

"They didn't say much about it. Most thought it was for Svetlana," he finally explained with a laugh.

The enchantment of their intimacy was broken, and Shane felt as though a bucket of freezing water had been dropped over him.

He blinked, attempting, but failing, to make sense of the sinking sensation in his gut. He shuffles uneasily until he realizes the feeling won't go away. Suddenly, he feels sick and empty.

He's hurt, he realizes.

It seems juvenile. Immature. The implication was made by his teammates, not even by Ilya. Nevertheless, Shane had to sit up and leave Ilya's comforting embrace, feeling like he had just swallowed something unpleasant.

"Shane?" the other instantly asked.

He shook his head as if he could shake the ugly thoughts from his head, but to no avail.

Ilya called for him again, sitting up as well and placing a hand on his arm, rubbing up and down. Shane was surprised at the urge to push him away.

Suddenly, he experienced a horrible déjà vu. Of tuna melts and spoken names and the same, horribly confusing feeling of dread.

He inhaled deeply, closing his eyes and counting to 5, trying to regulate himself.

"I am sorry, sweetheart. I shouldn't have said anything. Was stupid. Did not mean to laugh." Ilya was rambling next to him, pressing insistent kisses to his shoulder between sentences.

He opened his eyes and turned to look at Ilya, who made a distressed sound in the back of his throat at seeing the unshed tears in them.

“I’m sorry, I don’t know why-” Shane began, cutting himself off with a self-deprecating laugh and ducking his head down.

“No, no,” Ilya ushered, gently taking Shane’s chin between his fingers and turning his head towards them.

Shane felt horrible. Embarrassed at his irrational emotions. Awful for ruining their first night together.

Ilya called his name to grab his attention, and Shane tried his best to meet his gaze.

“Svetlana and I have not been like that for a long, long time. We are just friends now. You know that,” Ilya begins carefully, his eyes searching Shane’s face.

He forces himself to nod but feels too choked up to reply.

“I...I cannot cut her out of my life. She is my oldest friend. My only true friend, with you. But I can-” Ilya started helplessly, stopping when Shane began shaking his head.

“No...no, that’s not...” he begins, continuing to feel awful for tainting such a beautiful gesture.

He shuts his eyes hard enough not to let a tear slip and takes a deep breath in once more before facing Ilya again.

“It’s not because they thought it was for Svetlana-” he begins, but it feels like a lie. He presses his lips together, inhaling once more.

“Okay, it might be a little because of that. I-I know you’re friends now, but she’s someone you have been intimate with-...And I know people *can* be friends after having sex, like me and Rose, but that’s mostly because I’m gay and you’re not...and you had been together for *years* and she knows you since you were little, and-”

Ilya interrupted his rambling by calling his name and taking his face in his hands, shaking his head at him.

“I am here now, aren’t I? It is only you that I want. Just you,” he reiterates. Shane meets his eyes, and what he finds in them, absolute resolution, soothes the ache inside of him.

Ilya must see it on his face, his shoulders dropping slightly as he rushes forward to press a gentle kiss to his lips.

It soothes, but it doesn’t take the pain away completely. Shane lets his forehead rest against Ilya’s, sniffing as he moves his hand to come around Ilya’s wrist, his thumb finding the tattoo and stroking over it.

“It’s just that...” Shane begins, trying to find the right words of why the thought of people thinking Ilya had gotten the tattoo as a love declaration for his childhood hurt so much.

“She will always be the easier choice,” he whispers into the space between them, his voice catching slightly at the end.

“*Malysh*,” Ilya sighs, stroking his thumbs over Shane’s cheek and wiping away the single tear that had escaped him.

Shane once again laughs at himself, dry and humorless.

“I am sorry. You did this wonderful thing for me and I am butthurt over people thinking it’s for someone else,” he says with a shake of his head.

“No. It’s okay,” Ilya quickly reassures him, tightening the gentle hold on his face.

Shane tries to shake his head but with Ilya holding onto him, all he does is squish his cheeks into his palms.

“It’s not. It’s small and petty. It shouldn’t matter as long as I know why you did it, it’s just-”

He groans in frustration, not being able to find the words for his feelings.

“It sucks that we have to hide?” Ilya offers gently, so easily finding the reason for Shane’s breakdown like so often.

Shane just nods helplessly, grumbling in frustration.

Ilya is quiet for a moment, his thumbs still stroking softly over Shane’s cheeks before he lifts his head to press a kiss to his forehead.

“I can get rid of it. Cover it up,” Ilya then offers casually.

Shane whips his head up so fast it’s lucky he didn’t break Ilya’s nose, looking at him in shock.

“What?” he asks, panicked.

Does the gesture not carry the same meaning to him as it did to Shane? Was it just a spur-of-the-moment thing for him?

Ilya doesn’t meet his eyes, instead looking up at the ceiling.

“If you want me to,” he adds, his voice almost a whisper.

And Shane regrets having doubts about him. Even though he struggled with emotions, he was able to discern that Ilya was attempting to behave nonchalantly for his benefit, even if it meant hurting himself.

“Ilya...no. That’s the last thing I want,” he says genuinely. He sits up on his knees, pulling Ilya’s hands from his face and putting his own into the other’s golden curls, gently turning his head down so their eyes could meet.

At seeing Shane's distress at the idea of getting rid of the tattoo, Ilya's frigid expression turns into a tender smile.

"You sure? If it makes you uncomfortable, I can alwa-"

"No," Shane quickly interrupts him.

Suddenly, telling Ilya how much he loved him took precedence above his pain, jealousy, and self-loathing.

"Ilya. That is the most romantic thing anyone has ever done for me. And even if we cannot be public, it doesn't matter as long as we know what we are to each other, right?" he asks, maybe even a little desperately, needing the confirmation for himself as much as he wants to give it to Ilya.

That this thing that they are beginning is what they both want. What they both will fight for.

Ilya melts at the words, nodding at him before leaning forward to press a featherlight kiss underneath Shane's eye to his freckles.

The tension left Shane at once, and he fell forward, embracing Ilya, who returned the embrace.

"I love you. And I love *it*," he repeats.

Ilya huffs a small laugh before kissing the crown of his head.

Shane lifts his head up again, trying to give him his best glare.

"So don't you ever threaten to get rid of it ever again, okay? You said it's mine, so I better not see you destroying what belongs to me," he complains.

Ilya finally bellows a genuine laugh, making Shane smile in relief.

"Ah, I see. Mr. Landlord now has a new property, that's it?" he teases.

Before Shane could answer, Ilya pushed him forward until his back hit the mattress, pressing him down by his arms. Shane yelps before breaking out in bright laughter himself, his legs coming around Ilya's waist as the other attacks his face with kisses.

Their wrestling eventually turned into more, and soon enough it had turned dark outside, and Shane was on the verge of falling asleep as naked as the day he was born, completely blissed out in the arms of the man he loved, his earlier incident all but forgotten.

That is until Ilya stopped kissing up his chest from where he was pressed behind him to nip at his earlobe and say, "You know, I was prepared to have to cover it up anyway."

Shane had to pull himself from the edge of sleep to blink his eyes open in confusion, turning his head towards him.

"Hm?" he asked, his brain taking a moment to catch up.

Ilya chuckled at his cute expression, pressing a kiss to his furrowed brow.

“Nevermind,” he just said. Shane’s frown deepened and he whined, making Ilya chuckle before he heaved a sigh.

“Just, you know,” he began, hooking his chin over Shane’s shoulder.

“I thought that maybe you would not...appreaciate it so much. With the foundation and me moving to Ottawa, people might...figure it out more easily. S for Shane, like my close personal friend Shane Hollander,” he huffs.

Then, in an uncertain tone so uncharacteristic, he continued, “I had not thought about all of that before getting it. I just missed you and was...excited about starting a new chapter in life, so I... but once I did, I was afraid you might...be upset. And-”

Shane couldn’t help the fond chuckle that escaped him, effectively shutting Ilya up.

“I’m sure it will be fine,” he sighed, nuzzling into Ilya’s arm he was resting on and lifting his own arm to pet the other’s head. Then, with a yawn, he shut his eyes again, muttering under his breath for Ilya to stop worrying and do the same before telling him he loved him too.

3:24 AM

Ilya groaned when he saw the time on the alarm clock. Shane had turned on the light and prodded at him until he woke up for what Ilya wishes he could call the first time.

“Hollander, what-...?” he mumbled, trying to adjust to the brightness in the room.

“If people ask about it, you shouldn’t say it’s for Svetlana.”

Ilya placed his hands over his face and groaned into them.

“What?” he just repeated dumbly again, letting his hands fall to the side to look at his wide-awake boyfriend staring down at him.

Though he is irritated at being woken up, he can’t bring himself to snap at Shane or be truly annoyed at him.

After all, his boyfriend’s weird brain working overtime got him the dream he had been denying himself for years.

Even if afterwards his little midnight ramblings were less about love confessions and thinking about their future but more about planning what kind of bunk beds would be best for the training camps.

“Your tattoo. I kept thinking about what you said, about people figuring it out,” Shane explains matter of factly, rubbing over Ilya’s arm urgently.

Ilya just grunts in confirmation. It's best to just nod along with whatever Shane tells him in these situations and let his brain catch up later, unless he's being asked a direct question.

"And it might be easiest to say it's for her. But then, when we eventually...*do* come out, it will be confusing, and you'll feel bad about lying for years. Also, what if it gets back to her and she'll be upset?" he marches on.

"Sveta already knows it's for you. Who do you think booked me an appointment? Was her friend's studio," Ilya contributes dismissively. He looks over to his nightstand, contemplating if he should take a sip of water if this conversation will go on or if he can get Shane to get to his point in an appropriate amount of time.

"O-Oh, right...that is-..." Shane continues, sounding embarrassed.

"Yes. But she kept teasing me that it should be a 'J' for Jane," he remarks, lifting his hand to flick Shane's nose once and making him scrunch it up adorably.

"Anyways, I was thinking, just keep going with what you said in the interview since that's what everyone already thinks. *A partner who is private, with a high-profile career and no distinctive pronouns,*" he states.

From the pause afterwards Ilya feels like he is supposed to say something. He frowns, blinking up at Shane.

"So just repeat what I already said?" he asks. Shane nods aggressively.

Ilya whines.

"So you woke me up to tell me to keep going on exactly as I have?" he laments.

Shane opens his mouth to protest but seems to be unable to come up with a retort, closing his mouth and frowning.

"You are lucky that you're so pretty, and I love you, Hollander," Ilya sighs, shaking his head as he reaches over to finally take a sip from that water on his nightstand.

"Shut up," Shane grumbles, weakly kicking him underneath the sheets.

Ilya finished his drink and set the glass down on the table again before turning to Shane, who was staring down at a random spot on the bed, and throws himself back into the pillows with a sigh, realizing this would not be the end of it.

"What is it, hm?" he asks gently, running his hand through Shane's glossy hair again.

Shane blinks at the spot before turning to Ilya with a frown.

"Should I get a tattoo for you?"

Ilya lets out a long, drawn-out breath that makes Shane giggle.

"I'm serious! You did such a wonderful thing for me, and I...I want to reciprocate!" he stresses. He shuffles down a bit and rests his head on Ilya's shoulder, his hand rubbing soothing circles over Ilya's chest.

"Because you have to win at everything?" Ilya murmurs, trying his best to stay awake.

"No," he insists with a huff.

"Shane, sweetheart, you told me you never wanted tattoos." Ilya states matter of factly, letting his own hand come over Shane's on his chest to intertwine their fingers.

"Yes, but-"

"No. No *but*. Would not make me happy if you got something you didn't like," he tries to explain gently, bringing their hands up to his mouth to press a kiss to the back of Shane's.

"I like everything that has to do with you," Shane protests.

It tugs at Ilya's heart. That open, endless affection Shane is always willing to offer him so easily. He had spent so many years denying himself this or running from it. How could he explain to Shane that he didn't need a grand gesture to feel loved by him? He feels it every time Shane looks at him with those eyes that hide nothing or gifts him that special smile he likes to believe is just for him.

"Shane, my love, you don't have to...to *prove* anything. Or re-...repro-..."

He fumbles with the word, the English muddled in his head at such a late hour.

"Reciprocate," Shane offers in a whisper. Ilya nods before turning his head to press a kiss to Shane's forehead. He sighs at the contact, snuggling further into Ilya's shoulder, his nose brushing against his neck.

"You already gave me so much, *moy lyubimyy*. You let me into your life, your house, your family."

Ilya is aware that he will never be able to adequately convey in any language how much Shane's affection and his decision to choose him mean to him. It will always be too large for him to articulate. That sensation of having spent your entire existence in the dark, followed by the arrival of someone who surrounds you like a personal sun, changing everything and making the world appear brighter.

"But is it enough?" Shane asks, blinking up at him with genuine worry in his eyes.

Ilya sighs, his heart aching for him. If only his love could get out of his own head and see himself the way Ilya does.

In a way, he is glad, though. That Shane had grown up so loved, he can't fathom what it is like for Ilya to feel so loved by him for even the slightest offerings of affection that just feel so natural to him.

“Is more than anyone else has ever done for me,” he whispers honestly, ignoring the sting in his own eyes in favor of gently wiping his thumb over Shane’s cheeks as he watches his eyes get glossy.

He knows words will fail him, so instead he hooks his thumb under Shane’s chin to lift it up before pressing his lips to his, hoping to convey his sincerity that way.

They had always communicated better through touch anyhow.

They kiss and kiss and kiss until Ilya thinks the next time he’ll look at the alarm clock, it’ll tell him it’s a whole new day.

Ultimately, their movements become sluggish, and the gentle glide of their lips becomes more of a repetition of soft pecks.

“Don’t get a tattoo,” Ilya eventually whispers against his lips before pressing a final, sweet kiss to them.

“You sure?” Shane asks when he pulls away. He nuzzles into Ilya’s shoulder again, making him smile.

“Hm, yes, your mother would kill me. Is not worth it if I can’t enjoy it then,” he teases.

Shane chuckles, nipping at the skin of Ilya’s neck once. Then, he finally turns over with a groan, reaching out blindly until he finds the switch of the lamp, engulfing them in darkness again.

He settles back against Ilya, who finally allows himself to relax completely into the pillows, his arm coming around Shane to pull him closer.

"You have no regrets, right?" Shane murmurs into the darkness, reaching across to touch Ilya's right arm, and Ilya understands he's asking about more than just the tattoo.

“No regrets,” he reassures firmly, turning over his hand to grasp Shane’s and squeeze it once.

“I knew that with tattoo I was signing myself up for a lifetime of getting woken up in the middle of the night by my overthinking boyfriend,” he can’t help but tease.

“Fuck off, I-” Shane immediately grunts but then stops abruptly, sitting up again.

Ilya groans deeply when the light turns on again. He was so close.

“Wait. *Lifetime?*” Shane asks incredulously, looking at Ilya with stars in his eyes.

Jesus. This slow, fucking hockey player.

Ilya loves him to pieces, even if it may cost him all his nerves.

“Yes,” he breathes out slowly, rubbing over his eyes that are trying to adjust to the brightness again.

“*Really?*” Shane breathes in a small voice.

Ilya grunts, frowning up at Shane.

“What, you think I sell everything and move to Ottawa for the weather?” Shane laughs, wet and beautiful, before he rushes down to press his forehead to Ilya’s, who reaches out to cup his cheeks, fingers digging into his nape and thumb running over his face.

“I’m also in for the long game. You know that, right?”

Ilya laughs, calling him a hockey nerd through his tears before kissing him again and telling him he loves him in his mother language, over and over again. He makes a promise to himself that he will spend that lifetime making Shane see just how much.

Chapter End Notes

dense shane hollander you will always be dear to me, wdym u are surprised abt that man wanting to spend his life w u after uprooting his entire life and literally getting the first letter of your name etched into his skin forever

Chapter 2: Let them See

Chapter Notes

do u know those tts of like "First time wearing a hat. Everyone will know im not a hat person". Thats's how i feel about writing smut so idk what has gotten into me w this story i hope u can still enjoy tho

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

Montreal 2021

Ilya



Ilya adjusted the towel on his hips as he continued nervously biting on the gold chain in his mouth, anxiously tapping his foot while staring at the single message he had just typed on his phone screen.

Their first game against each other after being outed.

Ilya had almost bolted from the ice as soon as they were done accepting the trophy and shaking hands with the other players. Shane had avoided his eyes then.

The defeat was regrettable, Shane losing the game against Ottawa after tripping.

He was sure to struggle making an error like that, even back then on a good day, with a promised hook-up that Ilya would have made sure to make absolutely mind-blowing for him. After a defeat, Shane usually secretly enjoys giving himself over to him since it allows his mind to stop obsessing over every moment on the ice where he might have performed differently - even though he detests being coddled and Ilya would never consider doing so.

Today felt different, however. The loss came right after Shane was threatened with a season-long benching immediately following their public outing. As if he weren't the best fucking hockey player in their generation.

The recollection of Shane telling him about the threat made Ilya feel outraged. He could tell, even over a pathetic FaceTime, that his sweetheart was trying his best not to cry with the complete disrespect directed at him after 10 years of giving this sport his all.

And don't even get him started on that squad of traitors.

Ilya rolled his shoulder, sore from where he used every opportunity possible to legally check the Montreal players while getting away from the refs' scrutinizing gazes and, most

importantly, still trying to adhere to Shane's plea to "keep things as civil as possible."

"*You don't have to protect me or fuss over me. All I need is your support,*" Shane had said to him in a whisper. "*It's enough to know that you're there for me, even if I can't see or feel you,*" while he lay in Ilya's arms, vulnerable, soft, and pliable - a state he only allowed himself to be when he felt safe. When they were together.

Still, he felt as though a thread were being tugged inside of him, the string that was so intensely protective of Shane, his boyfriend, his heart, something instinct deep inside him telling him to keep him safe at all costs.

Ilya would move mountains for him.

And he would burn down the world if anyone hurt him. It was an urge he couldn't just so easily suppress.

Especially since he saw how worn out Shane was, more so every day that they had to deal with the fallout of what had happened.

For himself, it was a strange mixture of emotions. For the past three years, Ilya had wanted nothing more than to be open about his relationship, and he was sure once they finally were, that heavy weight on his chest would finally be lifted. And he had, accompanied by a startling feeling of dread and terror at the reaction from the rest of the world. He wasn't as immune as he had imagined. The anxiety of going into his locker room that day had almost been crippling.

He had a great team, though. A support system at last, something his therapist had urged him to get.

Shane hadn't been so lucky in that aspect and now seemed to only smile when he was around Ilya.

And Ilya had to tell himself that Shane willingly chose him in front of Connell, the NHL, and the entire world and that he would keep choosing him even if his relationship with Ilya put him at such a stark disadvantage.

He knew, despite the shared happiness of being out and the confidence in their relationship they both have gained, it still wasn't easy for Shane. Being shunned from the one thing Ilya had thought for some time he might love even more than him, no matter how wrong he had been in that assumption.

And now *that* loss.

Ilya tugged helplessly at his hair, his foot picking up speed while he stared at his phone.

Shane must be back in the locker room by now, and Ilya just needed *something* from him. To know he was okay. That his team wouldn't be dicks to him so he wouldn't have to march over there and kick their ass. Or maybe he was simply waiting for permission to do so.

Finally, a text bubble popped up, and Ilyas's shoulders dropped. His relief was short-lived, however, as the bubble stopped before picking up again, meaning whatever is going on in that locker room, Shane has a hard time putting it into words.

Ilya



Sweetheart

They think I tripped on purpose.

Ilya bit down on his necklace so hard his jaw hurt before he released it. His eyebrows creased and he sensed the underlying anger, stoked by his need to protect Shane, steadily flare up.

Before he could reply, Shane sent another message.

Sweetheart

Ik they had a problem with ‘us’ but accusing me of...

I’m speechless.

Ilya

Fuck them

It was an accident, Wyatt saw, he told me

Sweetheart

Yes, me too. Still. They don’t think so.

Ilya

fuck.

I’m sorry sweetheart

you don’t deserve this

Sweetheart

No. I really don’t.

God they want me to talk to the press now

Ilya

tell them to fuck off.

then hold open locker room for me so i can tell them to fuck off.

Twice. In russian and english.

maybe i'll goggle it in french on the way there so everyone will understand

Sweetheart

I have to go now.

They can tell I'm texting you.

Probably made it worse but whatever.

Will swallow it down for the press.

I love you.

Ilya

i love you too

So, so much

My brave boy

Frustrated, Ilya all but threw his phone back into the locker. The press was the last thing Shane should have to deal with now. So far, they had been able to avoid them, even though Yuna was still hanging a joint press conference over them to follow up on their joint statement after being outed.

But with this game?

Logically, Ilya knew Shane could handle himself. He was the definition of media-trained, always able to appear level-headed and collected, something Ilya had been so jealous of in their earlier years, only to now know better and realize it was simply Shane shutting down and putting on a mask.

With a huff, he dropped his towel and put on his underwear, compulsively checking his phone again to see if Shane might have texted him anything else, even though he knew he'd find nothing there.

He could tell the guys were watching him warily when he threw the phone back into the locker again with a loud clang before putting on his pants next.

“You good, Roz’?” Boodram carefully asked him.

Ilya huffed, resting his hands on his hips before turning around and rolling his shoulders to seep out some of the tension.

“Montreal are a bunch of stupid motherfuckers. Should have hit them harder and broken their bones,” he says darkly to explain his mood.

He watched as a few players huffed uneasy laughs, others frowning slightly in confusion. From the way Wyatt looked at him a bit pitifully, he guessed he made the connection between Ilya clutching his phone and then wishing death upon Montreal.

“Sucks, man,” he offers. Ilya nods at him while blowing another stream of air through his nose, his foot beginning to tap against the floor again.

“For what it’s worth-”

“Shut up,”

Ilya walked past Boodram, who had just spoken up, a hand raised to quiet him while he walked through the room just where Wyatt was standing.

“Someone get this thing on,” he demanded, pointing up at the mounted TV at the corner of the room behind the goalie that he had just spotted.

In his time playing against Montreal as a Raider, Ilya had forbidden turning on the TV to watch their rivals' postgame interviews. He had frankly never cared too much about any opposing team's post-game interview, as they were more or less all the same. Yet in the year Shane had become captain of the Metros and therefore been pranced before the media, Ilya had spoken out the ban.

For one, because after their games, Ilya had always been incredibly worked up with the excitement of seeing Hollander in just a few hours for their usual post-hookup. And suddenly seeing him on TV, all sweaty, glorious, and slightly cocky from the win, talking in *fucking French* in a tight compression shirt, gave Ilya a hard-on he didn't really need to show off in front of his teammates.

The other reason, however, was that as soon as Hollander came on screen, his teammates suddenly had a lot to say about the other captain, especially after a loss. Though he had tried to convince himself at the time that him and Hollander were nothing but mere fuckbuddies - the ‘buddies’ part of that meant generously - he couldn't help but feel protective over him, even back then, his teammates' insults feeling like acid down his throat. And when one of his fellow players had said something about the beautiful shape of Hollander's eyes, Ilya had been ready to throw fucking hands.

Instead, he had thrown the remote at the idiot, spoken out a ban against racist comments and watching boring post-game interviews in the scariest impression of his father he could manage and felt horrible and in denial all the way through. That had been it.

Now he was standing in only his pants, tapping his foot impatiently and biting down on his lower lip as he looked up at the TV, ignoring the questioning gazes from his teammates as they looked around for the remote before the screen finally came to life.

“*Woah. What the hell?*”

"When did they prepare all this?"

"Jesus, all that for a simple home game?"

Ilya grunted as he looked at the image on screen, ignoring his teammates' exclamations behind him.

Gone was the small hallway designated for interviews, with a banner of logos from sponsors, where Shane usually held his home ice postgame interviews. Instead, it was replaced with a lavish set that looked like a tribunal, where he sat squarely behind a table decorated by a frankly obscene amount of microphones, his hands clasped together on top of it as he looked ahead, his posture rigid. He was alone, with no coaches or managers by his side, in front of a stonewall, caging him in.

Ilya's heart instantly ached for him. He looked so alone out there, his love, his *solnyshko*.

"Hollander, what would you rate your performance today? That was quite a fall you took there at the end, costing you the game."

Ilya winced at the question, though Shane remained cold-faced on screen. To Ilya's eyes, however, the slight twinge in his jaw was unmistakable.

"I gave it my best, as I always aim to do. Nevertheless, I am quite unsatisfied with the result. Making a mistake like that is not how I see myself as a player, and I will reflect on my performance and come back stronger," he says.

Ilya sighs, "Always so hard on yourself, moy lyubimiy," under his breath, not caring if his teammates can hear him.

"And how would you respond to the people who are saying that your relationship with an opponent has a negative effect on your play?"

The question is so brutally direct that it makes a number of players in the locker room grimace and whisper to themselves. Ilya grits his teeth while keeping his gaze fixed on the TV as a cold wave of fury washes over him.

Shane furrows his eyebrows and clenches his jaw, a great exhibition of emotion for him. Several camera flashes go off, and Ilya feels as though he is witnessing the love of his life being surrounded by a ferocious pack of wolves before they gradually tear into him.

"I don't see what my private life has to do with the game." Shane speaks into the mic, voice clipped and irritation beginning to bloom in his features as several more flashes and murmurs of reporters set off. Ilya swears he even hears someone scoff off-screen, and the fury ignites.

"It certainly wouldn't if your partner wasn't someone you were facing on the ice. The captain of the opposing team, no less. You can't deny that relationship raises some ethical concerns," the same reporter follows up.

Ilya watches as Shane exhales through his nose, moving one thumb over the other from where his hands lie clasped together on the table.

"I don't, actually. My relationship has been going on for several years, as was revealed to the press, and it never once has affected either of our plays," Shane grits. The reporters once again break out in a chorus of whispers between themselves.

Ilya lets his fingers dig into his hipbones from where he is resting them.

"But can you claim that you have never favored each other during a game, maybe even inadvertently?" another female reporter speaks up.

"I don't know what you are trying to imply with 'favored,' but *no*, there was no special treatment from either of us. Whenever we met each other on the ice, we were rivals and nothing more," Shane answers with a barely concealed scoff.

Troy, who had stepped next to him, murmurs, "This is hard to watch," and gives Ilyas a single, supportive shoulder clap.

Ilya doesn't acknowledge him, letting his eyes rake over Shane on the screen.

There's a shrill sound going off in his head, an instantaneous tinnitus. It rings like an alarm siren and grows louder with every second he watches Shane keep his composure on the TV, getting more irritated with every thinly veiled accusation they are throwing at him. Against *them*.

"We have received information that your team and management, quote, 'felt blindsided by the news.' Do you think you have upheld your duty as Captain?" another reporter rushes to ask.

Ilya knew Shane more intimately than anyone on this planet, he liked to believe. And while the world just watched Shane Hollander simply dip his head at the question and figured he was formulating his answer in his head, Ilya instantly knew that that question had just crushed something inside him.

Ilya's fury at those reporters, the fucking metros, the NHL, and the entire world all came together to form a single conclusion, and all of a sudden he felt a peculiar calmness.

Ignoring his team's inquiries, he nodded to himself and began moving in the direction of the locker room entrance.

"Roz? Where the hell are you going?"

"Rozaanov?"

"Cap, whatever you are planning, I don't thi-

Shane was already thinking of the headlines.

Hollander storms out mid-interview over questions of his conduct!

Hollander and Rozaanov insider trading?

Was it all a lie? Hollander breaks down in interview!

He was sitting there as calmly as he could while the most disrespectful questions about his career, his life, and his integrity were being thrown at him.

And he knew, the second he would declare he was done answering questions, calmly get up, and leave without much fuss, he'd be the villain.

The second he'd defend himself, get snippy, raise his voice, or twist his face, he'd confirm what they all had already made up in their minds about him.

It was like he was 17 years old again, sitting in a similar room and being asked if he felt the pressure of representing 'young boys like him' while his teammates got asked what they did with their signing bonuses. Or like being 22 and winning his first Stanley Cup for his team after ten years and being asked what it felt like 'overcoming his limitation' as the 'only player of his descent' and the 'struggles' that come with that.

His mother had drilled it into him to stay calm and collected. To answer these questions diplomatically, no matter how outrageous or invasive they got, for he *was* in fact responsible for the people who saw themselves in him and nowhere else.

At the thought of now a whole new group of people looking at him for answers, like he had looked up to Scott Hunter ever since his kiss on the ice, he felt choked up by a whole new, crushing sense of responsibility. One had been dreadfully trying to avoid for years.

Another thing they could define him by. Build a narrative around him out of his control if he didn't play his part perfectly, with no room for error.

"Hollander? Are you refusing a statement?"

He blinked, slowly coming back to himself. What had the question been?

Another thinly veiled attempt at accusing him and Ilya of cheating for the past decade? A dig at his skills as captain? An invasion into his intimate life?

Shane really didn't want to know. He wanted to leave, get up and find the nearest bathroom to throw up in.

His team hated him. From what it seemed like, the world of the sport he had dedicated his entire life to hated him. And after that game today he couldn't say he didn't hate himself either.

"I'm sorry. Could you please repeat the question?" he asked instead, his voice flat as he stared ahead into the sea of cameras pointed at him. The various faces of the reporters behind them were obscured by the glaring lights aimed at him.

"The question was if there's any disciplinary action towards you and Roza-"

The reporter cut off as several people in the room, reporters and staff alike, released quiet gasps and hushed whispers.

Shane tried to squint behind the bright lights to follow their eyes as he blinked at the disturbance. All he could see was the direction in which their heads had turned, so he turned to face the hallway's entrance, which would hopefully lead to his escape soon enough.

Broadcast cameras turned and flashes went off just as Ilya stepped through the tunnel, casually strolling in as if he had all the time in the world. His gorgeous locks were damp and slicked back, droplets pouring onto his bare carved chest, and he was clad in only jeans, his feet bare.

When he saw him approaching him, his jaw dropped slightly.

His gaze remained fixed on his bare feet on the chilly, filthy floor, and he considered reprimanding him later for catching a cold. Ilya would respond, "*Russians do not get colds. And if they do, vodka will fix. Kills all Bacteria,*" like always.

As more flashes erupted and the chatter of the reporters grew louder, Shane's eyes went over the rest of Ilyas's body, perhaps to confirm that what he was seeing was real. At last, he landed on his face, where their eyes finally locked.

It must have been tension of the entire day, the entire month, or even the entire fucking *decade* snapping inside him. Or perhaps it was just the way Ilyas's eyes held a fire beneath them while his gorgeous mouth was turned up in such a shit-eating grin full of promise that finally broke him and he laughed out loud. Louder than he ever had on camera.

He instantly felt a couple of cameras turn back towards him, but his eyes stayed on Ilya, whose smile widened at Shane's reaction. In fact, it appears to embolden him, as if it were the approval he had been waiting for. He clapped loudly and addressed the media as he strutted casually towards Shane's table.

"I hope you do not mind," he said to the room, his voice booming and instantly commanding attention.

Shane was aware his eyes were glued to him, following his every move, and that the cameras were certainly picking up on that. Ilya wasn't doing much better, though, as even while he had addressed the room, his eyes had never left Shane's.

So uncharacteristically, so against every drilling he had received from his coaches and media experts and his mom, Shane snorted. The situation was just so...ridiculous.

Ilya was so ridiculous, not changing that attitude of grandeur in 10 years, remaining so utterly true to himself.

Shane was so incredibly, painfully in love with him.

Ilyas's smile widened at Shane's outburst, and he hummed pleasantly, stalking toward him like he was the center of his universe. He settled back into his seat, crossing his arms in front of his chest and awaiting what he would do, Ilya suddenly being the only person who mattered to him in that room.

When he feels tears well up in the corners of his eyes, he grinds his nails into his biceps to distract himself. He had no idea how long they had been there, possibly since Ilya had entered the room, and he had just felt so, *so* relieved at having him there.

When Ilya finally got to Shane, he stopped directly behind his seat and put a hand on his shoulder, giving him a little reassuring squeeze.

“I heard my name and thought I should join, yes?” Ilya continued, his voice a perfect mix of mockery and nonchalance that had Shane biting down on his tongue to stop from laughing *again*.

The reporters let out a series of uneasy chuckles, and Shane could barely make out pages turning and aggressive scribbling of their notepads over the hushed conversations.

Refusing to look up at Ilya, he leaned back in his chair and inhaled deeply, allowing the familiar smell of his boyfriend's body wash, the one he had taken from *Shane's* apartment, to envelop him. Ilya liked to claim he stole Shane's products for convenience, but Shane knew it was to feel like Shane was with him at all times. It was the same reason he liked to steal Ilya's clothing.

With his back still bleeding from the daggers his team had inserted, he had to close his eyes and gather himself lest he burst into tears at the mere feeling of him so close.

As the reporters tried to adjust to the new situation, Ilya slid the hand on Shane's shoulder down his chest while he leaned forward to be in frame, his head hovering next to Shane's, who opened his eyes and continued to look straight ahead, this time failing to hide his bemused smirk.

Fine.

They wanted to talk about Hollander and Rozanov?

Here they were.

And Shane was definitely the lesser of two evils. He hoped they were prepared for whatever Ilya had held in that promising smirk when he entered.

Someone gasped then, and Shane frowned at the cameras zooming in on Ilya's hand on his chest.

Was this already too much PDA for them? Scott Hunter could make out with his boyfriend on ice, but god forbid scandalously outed former rivals, Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, barely touched each ot-

“Rozanov! Does that ring mean...what we think it means?”

Shane blinked at the question and he finally glanced down, his heart stopping in his chest when he saw it. The golden ring he had proposed with, just an hour ago hung safely around Ilyas's neck along his mother's crucifix. The same ring Shane had finally worn his matching one on a chain around his neck for this game himself, making Ilya smile so hard he lost the

face-off. The ring, the symbol of their bond, was now sitting snugly on Ilya's finger to show it off to the world.

Shane reasoned that his brain must be genuinely malfunctioning since he just kept staring at it on Ilya's finger, forgetting that everyone's eyes were on them.

He wanted to cry. He wanted to pull the man next to him in to kiss him stupid, not caring about anyone. He wanted to take his hand and shove it into the cameras and tell the world they could fuck off.

Instead, he laughed again, warm and at ease, and thought to himself; "*What a possessive bastard.*"

The action was just so wholly Ilya...how could Shane be anything but utterly fond of it?

He knew that he had already laughed too much and smiled too hard at Ilya's clearly provocative behavior. The headlines would accuse him of not taking it seriously.

Perhaps they would say Ilya had rubbed off on him? That he's a bad influence.

The thought makes Shane huff another laugh, though he tries his best to hide it. He can feel Ilya watching him from the corner of his eyes, where his head is hovering next to Shane's, but he still can't bring himself to turn and look at him. Who knows if they will ever stop giggling if he does?

"I don't know what you think. Is still language barrier, you see, 'cause I think in Russian. But this ring was given to me as a proposal for marriage by my boyfriend, if you must know," Ilya replies conversationally, followed by a shrug.

Shane's heart momentarily stops at the words '*boyfriend*' and '*marriage*' spoken so casually in front of the press, but he tries his best not to show it.

He wishes Ilya were sitting beside him in that moment. That way, they could communicate with their feet, a single tap against the other's foot as a soothing gesture.

As if feeling his distress, Ilya leans back, ignoring the room, which has broken out in discussions again.

Shane can vividly picture the smug look on his boyfriend's face at seeing the havoc he just caused with *that* announcement. He, on the other hand, must look deathly pale in the broadcast right now, his eyes wide and unmoving, like he was elocuted and then frozen in place.

"Now," Ilya's voice booms again, catching everyone's attention.

Suddenly, the scent of Shane's body wash became much more potent as Ilya all but pressed himself to Shane's back, his hair brushing against Ilya's chest, before two strong, muscled arms reached out to either side of him.

The settle on the table, successfully bracketing Shane in, while Ilyas's face once again comes up next to Shane's, his chin hovering mere inches over his shoulder. They are so close that Shane can feel Ilyas's stubble against his cheek, and he sucks in a breath, processing the proximity in front of the cameras but consciously not moving, letting his boyfriend's encompassing presence soothe him and tether him to this spot.

The image they must make on camera is undoubtedly counterproductive. Ilya, hovering over him, encasing him between his arms, glaring into the room of reporters that had dared to attack Shane's integrity.

He knows how the public will react. What the hockey world will say about him. What words they'll call him.

He should probably be angry at Ilya for putting him in that position. In the past, he might have been.

For coming to his aid without being asked, as if Shane couldn't handle himself. For making him look *weak*.

And yet he had no malice within him.

He was just...so, *so* sick of hiding.

Let them see how much he is loved. And how much he loves this impossible man in return.

If someone saw this and still believed that two people who chose each other in spite of all the obstacles in their way were wrong for simply existing, then that person is the one with a problem. Shane truly has had enough of letting other people's problems control his life.

His eyes follow Ilya's hands as they move over the table, with the ball of his palm still lying on top of the surface while his fingers grip the edge from below. He finds the act amusing since he figures it's to make his arms appear even more powerful, making the veins more noticeable.

But then, his gaze shifts towards Ilya's right hand, and he knows the action was deliberate for another reason.

That goddamn tattoo.

And in that moment, he decides to suppress the urge to let his eyes snap back towards the room to scour the reactions to see if anyone has made the connection yet.

Instead, he chooses to save them the work.

With a smirk, he extends his hand to encircle Ilya's wrist, his thumb grazing the tattoo's edge, having committed the placement to memory, while he stares straight ahead. Ilya takes a deep breath at the contact but doesn't move otherwise.

He looks forward into the buzzing sea of microphones, cameras, lights, and reporters, and as he lets his thumb continue to move across Ilya's skin, he experiences a sense of clarity that

verges on absolution.

Ilya had chosen him with this years ago.

And finally, Shane was returning the favor.

Ilya might argue that he had already done so enough. That he had chosen him over hockey, over his career, and his friends, repeatedly, throughout the years. And while that might be true in some parts, this moment was the catharsis Shane had so desperately craved years ago, when he watched his senior pull his boyfriend into a kiss in front of millions. Finally, he was brave enough to do the same.

He smiles fondly to himself, squeezing Ilya's wrist once before letting his hand simply rest there.

In sharp contrast to the turmoil just moments earlier, a quiet has descended upon the room, suggesting that they must have broken the poor reporters' minds. At last, the realization and the confirmation of who Ilya Rozanov's mysterious tattoo actually was for now stood in the room and collectively stunned everyone in it.

Shane sank deeper into his seat, feeling like a complete asshole and relishing every moment of it as he stifled a laugh at witnessing their bravado so promptly disappear. He cleared his throat, raising a single eyebrow.

"I believe the last question was about possible disciplinary actions against us?"

Ilya, no help whatsoever, just straight up laughs at the statement, almost breaking Shane's facade of bravery.

This seems to bring the reporters back to life, as several people awkwardly clear their throats or shuffle in their seats.

"Let me answer," Ilya says before leaning forward, or rather *over* Shane, to speak into the microphones, Shane remaining where he is.

"We have received threats of disciplinary action, yes. But since we have broken no rules anywhere, they were pretty groundless. Our agent has been in touch with the NHL to kindly remind them of this fact,"

"We're probably blowing our whole lives up right now," Shane thinks to himself.

Yet as Ilya leans back, adjusting his hold on the table so his arms are even closer to him, his intoxicating smell settling over him like a soothing balm, he really can't find it in himself to care anymore.

"What is your united response to the concerns about fixing in light of your relationship then? You can't deny that today's game in particular seemed predetermined, with Hollander's sudden 'accidental' throwing of the game," some truly brave reporter in the back shouted out.

"*What a cunt,*" Shane said in his head, instantly followed by the thought that perhaps Ilya really had rubbed off on him, no pun intended.

Ilya had no qualms about letting his emotions at the disrespectful question show as he scoffed loudly before muttering in Russian into Shane's ear. He couldn't quite translate everything so quickly, but he figured it was more or less of the same sentiment he had just thought in his head.

Ilya lifted his head back up, releasing a huff through his nose. Shane didn't turn his head to see the expression on his face, but with the nervous energy passing through the room, he could imagine it - the well-known angry scowl of Ilya Rozanov, usually seen before someone would get brutally checked into the boards.

Shane forced himself to relax his features. He refused to give the reporter he could barely make out behind the lights even a blink, hoping his silence conveyed enough.

Everyone needs to embarrass themselves, after all. And as Ilya had reminded him just last night, he was *Shane fucking Hollander*.

It was the reporter's funeral to throw such an accusation against a spotless record of 10 years, and Shane suddenly felt so over this whole ordeal.

"You wish to take this, Hollander?" Ilya asked him, surprising Shane, though he did not show it. From the way his hands were clutching the edge, veins now truly protruding from the probable effort not to throw the fucking table at the piece-of-shit reporter, Shane figured he was actively holding himself back. Allowing Shane to speak up for himself if he wished, simply providing a solid wall of support behind him.

Before he could think it over, he leaned forward, continuing to stare ahead and letting his eyes become ice.

"No."

It was like him and Ilya had entered a Freaky Friday special, and god, did it feel good.

"Hm, then let me," Ilya instantly answered, and Shane barely let the corner of his mouth twitch into a smile.

"Let all stop looking at baseless accusations and start looking at facts. You know, the things you should all actually report, yes?" Ilya taunts. From the affronted gasps, he hit the mark. Shane felt the corner of his mouth involuntarily lift up.

"Luckily, we have the one person here who cares most about hockey. *Malysh*, will you do us the honor?" Ilya then says, turning his head to look at Shane, his lips mere inches from his cheek.

Shane tries his best to ignore him, tapping his foot against the ground to regulate himself somehow before he takes in a deep breath, letting his face remain poised and unchanged.

"Over the course of our careers, we have faced each other about 44 times total. Around 38 matchups while Ilya was playing for Boston, and then about 6 games so far since Ilya has been on the Centaurs for two seasons. In all these years, I have missed 2 games due to injury and Ilya 3, thus leaving roughly 39 games where we both played. I have won 19 of those games, and Ilya 20 with the win today," he rattled off.

There was some murmuring, and Shane turned to look at the staff in the back who were aggressively scrolling over their tablets and speaking into headsets.

"You can check that," he adds coldly, knowing the numbers were exact.

"Hm, you forgot the All-Stars," Ilya purrs into his ear, still loud enough for the room to hear.

"4 wins for me, 3 for you," Shane answers immediately.

"And one together," Ilya says, his voice free of any taunt or mockery but simply fond. Meant for him, not the cameras before he looks ahead again to address them.

"Does that satisfy your concerns? We are the same players we always have been. No special treatment, no fixing, no betting. Just two of the greatest hockey players of all time, playing hard against each other while being in love."

If it weren't for him perfecting his particular mask of nonchalance all his life, he would have laughed at the hidden meaning.

Several reporters spoke over each other, matching each other's similar outrageous questions like, "*Well, since when have you been together exactly?*", "*So you're telling the hockey world to just get used to it?*" "*Why didn't you come out when Scott Hunter did?*"

"*Let's end this now, my beloved,*" Ilya finally whispered into his ear in Russian. Shane gave him a minuscule nod.

"Since there seem to be no more relevant questions in regard to tonight's game, I will take my leave now," he declares, waiting for Ilya to step back before getting up, ignoring the reporters' protests.

Instinctively, Shane reaches out for him, putting a hand to his shoulder to steer him towards the hallway, ignoring the camera flashes going off behind them. Ilya mirrors the action by placing a hand on Shane's lower back, not pushing him but simply resting there as they walk outside side by side, leaving the chaos behind them.

As soon as they were deep enough in the hallway to be out of sight for the cameras, Shane had moved his hand from Ilya's shoulder to his wrist, grasping it tightly before marching ahead, leaving Ilya to trail after him.

"*I'm in trouble.*" he thinks distinctly. The adrenaline of the press conference was still wearing off him. He had tried his best to compose himself and let the media embarrass themselves before he snarled or screamed at them, like he had wished to do.

He knew it was risky to barge in like that. That Shane might be upset at him for it.

Seeing how rigidly his boyfriend was holding himself, marching on like he was being chased and ignoring the curious glances of staff as he rounded corners deeper into the arena without saying a single word, Ilya figured what awaited him was an earful at best.

When he had entered the room and saw the expression on Shane's face, the utter relief at having him there, and even managed to make him laugh so beautifully, Ilya had thought it would be fine and that he had made the right decision. But maybe not?

His mind was in overdrive, already coming up with multiple excuses and promises to never do it again. That darker part of his brain he was still learning to ignore was screaming at him that he had just ruined everything, growing louder with every second Shane spent silently dragging him through the tunnels.

He is going to break up with you for good now. You were finally too much. He wasn't ready yet. He never wanted this. He will-

Shove him into a storage unit, apparently.

Ilya could barely blink at the sudden change when Shane had abruptly halted in an empty hallway in front of some door, throwing his head around left to right, punching in a quick code before it opened and Ilya was all but thrown into it.

Barely a second later, Shane joined him, quickly shutting the door behind him and engulfing them in darkness. Ilya opened his mouth to speak, but before he could, he had an armful of the most talented hockey player kissing him like he was starving for it.

Ilya stumbles back with the sheer force Shane had crashed into him, his bare back hitting a shelf of some sort, rattling over whatever was on it. Afraid the things would hit Shane, he quickly adjusted, giving back as good as he got into the kiss while pushing them backwards until Shane's back hit the door, Ilya's hand on the back of his head to protect him.

Only then, with Shane pressed firmly into the door and Ilya all over him, being back in that familiar position of kissing in the darkness, did they both start to smile into the kiss.

Ilya licked into his mouth hungrily, his relief making him sigh into it. He clutched at Shane's waist before patting down until he found his thigh, grabbing onto it and hitching it over his waist, holding onto it while grinding into him.

They both groaned at the action, Shane letting his head fall back into the door and Ilya using the momentum to attack his neck, licking and biting to his heart's content.

Shane keened, grinding against him as he dug his fingers into the short hairs on Ilya's nape. Eventually, he used his grasp to pull Ilya into a kiss again, which he happily complied with as they continued to mindlessly grind against each other. Ilya couldn't help but keep smiling into the kiss like a crazy person, occasionally moaning into Shane's mouth at the maddening friction.

Shane let out a frustrated groan when he couldn't keep kissing Ilya's smiling lips like he intended, and he finally pulled him back by his hair, making him groan. In a smooth motion that left him dizzy, Shane planted his leg on the ground and grabbed onto Ilya's pants, using his hold to flip them around, successfully pushing Ilya into the door before kissing down his neck himself.

Suddenly, the room lit up, Ilya blinking at the abrupt change. Shane must have hit the switch with the hand that wasn't currently cupping Ilya through his jeans.

Desperate to see him Ilya mirrored Shane's previous actions and pulled him back by his hair at the back of his head, though with Shane it always felt more like pulling at a puppy's scruff for being naughty.

When their eyes met, Ilya felt his breath get knocked out of him. Shane looked debauched, so different from just moments ago, where he had stared those reporters down like the fucking king of hockey that he was.

Now, he was panting heavily, his eyes glassy and unfocused, his beautiful lips kiss-bitten and shiny with Ilya's spit, looking like he did in Ilya's daydreams.

"*Fuck...*" he breathed out, his eyes going over the several red spots that were already forming on his neck.

Without much further ado, he pulled him back in, a hand to his cheek to angle his head just right for their next clash. They moaned into the kiss, and Shane let Ilya lead for a moment before pulling back, Ilya chasing his lips like an addict looking for his next fix. He might as well be.

Shane let his lips be chased once, twice more, before pulling back far enough that Ilya was forced to open his eyes again and look at him, their foreheads coming to rest against each other as they each caught their breath for a moment.

"I love you," Shane breathed out, his chest heaving.

Ilya just smiled, running his thumb over Shane's cheek.

"I know," he says.

Shane's eyes were raking over his face as if taking in every detail before fixating on his lips again. He rushed forward to catch them in a soft kiss, like he might die if he didn't keep on kissing him. Ilya knew the feeling.

He would not have it any other way, even if the continual push and pull was driving him insane. Unlike all the previous times they had hidden away to love each other, this time it wasn't due to fear or shame, which made it one of the finest moments of his life. No, love was the cause. So raw, so unabashedly, they couldn't take being apart for a moment longer after so publicly choosing each other.

Then, unexpectedly, Shane's lips left him, nearly causing Ilya to bite him hard enough to extract blood from the spot where he held Shane's lower lip between his teeth before the other abruptly disappeared.

He let out a confused sound and blinked his eyes open to follow as Shane sunk to his knees in one fluid motion, his hands already firmly planted against the V lines of Ilya's stomach. He maintained eye contact with Ilya the entire way down, those glorious Bambi fuck-me eyes gazing up at him and robbing him of his breath once again.

The center of Ilya's universe, right there, looking like he'd cease to exist if he didn't get to suck his cock this instant.

"Holy shit," he breathed at the sight, raising his arms helplessly in the air as Shane wasted no time to mouth at him through his boxers. Ilya hadn't even realized when he had unzipped his pants and shoved them down enough to reveal his underwear, but he wasn't complaining.

As Shane mouthed at him, something was ringing in the back of his head that was similar to the warning signs he had heard before. It was less urgent this time, but it still interfered with what should have been our enjoyment of his desperate boyfriend's mouth on him.

He growled in frustration before fisting his hand into Shane's hair, giving it a gentle tug to grab his attention.

Shan pulled back only slightly with that adorably confused sound he made in the back of his throat whenever Ilya dared to back away from him, the one that would never fail to tug at his heart or make his dick twitch.

His mouth was still hanging open, his eyes glazed over, and Ilya briefly wondered if perhaps now he would be allowed to finally take pictures of him like this. He quickly bites down on his bottom lip, being surprised and impossibly turned on when he finds it to be sensitive. Shane must have sunk his teeth into it too hard earlier, not holding himself back for once. The sensation made Ilya shut his eyes and groan as he threw his head against the door, tugging at Shane's hair again. As reward or punishment, Shane moaned at the action either way, and the sound echoing through the otherwise empty room is what finally snaps Ilya back to reason.

"Are you sure, *Hollander*?" he asked meaningfully, hoping using Shane's last name, his fucking *title* in these halls, would convey his concern.

"They will be looking for us," he continues before looking down at him again.

Shane's face quickly morphed into what Ilya had titled his unamused grumpy cat face, the one that tolerated no bullshit. Excitement instantly ran through him, since from years of their hookups, he knew the only thing hotter than a cocky Shane riding the high of a win was a Shane that wanted to prove something. It was the reason Ilya loved to win against him so much.

If only those reporters knew that side of the story; they would never accuse them of fixing their games again.

Without saying anything, Shane reached up to grab Ilya's hand in his hair, roughly pulling it down his head by his wrist and bringing it down to his face. He pushed his thumb into Ilya's palm, causing the hand to tip back, before slowly bringing it up to his mouth all while maintaining intense eye contact.

Ilya had stopped blinking - or even *breathing* - as he watched Shane dart his tongue out to lick a stripe over the tattoo.

The sound he let out was entirely too loud considering the concern he had about being found out just moments ago, but he didn't care. He was cursing in Russian and English, switching between calling Shane the sweetest and dirtiest things he knew.

His *fiance* didn't have mercy on him, smirking at the reaction before lowering his gaze to repeat the action agonizingly slowly, starting with just the tip of his tongue just below the letter before flattening it out against it, letting it run over his pulse point.

Ilya was breathing hard as if he had just run a marathon, straining painfully hard in his pants and having to shut his eyes briefly to stop himself from coming, his other hand forming a fist and punching the door he was leaning against once.

He had to laugh at himself, though it sounded rather pitiful to his own ears. Shane had reduced him to a heaving mess without even touching his dick directly. "Fuck, they'll definitely find us now," he laughed. He finally looked down at Shane again, who was alternating between pressing soft kisses into Ilya's hand and his lower stomach.

"Fuck, baby," Ilya moaned, using his other hand to push it back into Shane's hair. His eyes closed at the action, and he hummed happily before continuing to kiss down Ilya's happy trail.

"You don't know how many times I dreamt of just fucking you right here in this arena after a game. Make you scream my name loud enough that everyone could hear who the golden boy of Canada got on his knees for," he groaned, pulling Shane's head back by his hair to see his reaction at the confession.

He moaned, beautiful and high, his eyes practically rolling back into his head before he shut them, his shiny mouth hanging open.

"Yeah, you would have liked that, wouldn't you?" Ilya teased, though from how heavily he was breathing, he didn't think he sounded as domineering as he would have liked. He felt more like a worshipper, asking for confirmation for his prayer.

In lieu of answering, Shane just slowly blinked his eyes open again, blinking up at him. Then he used the grip he still had on Ilya's right hand to bring it up to his mouth, pressing the fingers to his lips. Ilya stopped breathing once more and just watched as Shane let them drag over his bottom, stopping himself from just pushing them into his mouth. Finally, without looking away from him, Shane opened his mouth and dipped his head forward to suck in Ilya's middle and ring fingers, his eyes fluttering closed in bliss at the action.

When he had swallowed them into the second knuckle, he finally shut his eyes for good and dipped his head back enough to release them before sucking them back in, Ilya moaning loudly at the action and calling out for a god he hadn't believed in since he was 12 years old.

Shane repeated the motion, and Ilya crooked his fingers to press down on his tongue, making him moan at the action. At last, when he was down to the second knuckle again, he suddenly lifted his head up, fingers still in his mouth as he looked up at Ilya with those eyes so full of devotion Ilya had sworn a long time ago to work every day for the rest of his life to deserve.

Finally, without breaking his gaze, he dipped forward enough to suck the two fingers in entirely and his tongue pressed against the cool metal of the ring on Ilya's finger.

At the sight, Ilya was helpless to shout out his name, clutching his hair tightly before his vision whitened out and he was cumming.

Jesus Christ. Just last evening in the trophy room and now this. Two of the most powerful orgasms of his life in under 24 hours.

By the time he finally comes back to himself, Shane is standing upright again, pressing soft kisses to his neck and jaw and holding on to him. Ilya's forehead is resting on his shoulder, his hands resting on Shane's waist without much grip as his boyfriend is practically holding him up.

Hot air tickles his earlobe, and he grunts, trying his best to get his breathing under control. It is then that he registers the sound, quiet and subdued but beautiful nonetheless. One of Ilya's favorite sounds in the entire world.

Shane was giggling to himself, interrupting the press of his lips to Ilya's skin ever so often to chuckle quietly, his shoulder shaking with the action and disturbing Ilya's head resting on them.

"Shut up," he mutters, trying to pinch Shane on his side.

Shane just giggles harder, and Ilya breathes out air through his nose, suddenly feeling horribly embarrassed.

"You will not let me live this down, will you?" he whines.

Shane laughs wholly now, pressing a long kiss to his cheek so affectionate Ilya can't help but lean into it before he cruelly pulls away, making Ilya lean back. Still feeling wrung out he lets his head thud against the door again, his eyes still half fluttered shut as he looks at the love of his life smiling at him.

"The great Ilya Rozanov coming in his pants? On Montreal home ice, no less? Not a chance," he teases.

Ilya can't bring himself to be annoyed with him, even if he may playfully roll his eyes. Happiness looks so good on Shane.

“Come here,” he whispers, suddenly feeling like he is miles away from him instead of mere inches. Shane immediately falls into his open arms and they just stand there for a moment, embracing and breathing each other in.

“Did you...?” Ilya eventually asks, trailing a hand from Shane’s waist over his ass and squeezing once, making him laugh.

“I took care of it,” he huffs. Ilya pulls back slightly, frowning at him.

Now it was Shane’s turn to look embarrassed as he turned his head from him.

“On...the ground. Soon after you. I used my hand,” he explains.

Ilya just hums in acknowledgement, already planning to better himself once they get home, as he watches the beautiful blush spread over those freckles he adores.

Suddenly, Shane laughs again, finally facing Ilya again.

“Luckily we’re in a place that’s well equipped,” he smiles, reaching a hand out to grab a roll of toilet paper from the shelf next to them that Ilya had taken absolutely no notice of.

He laughs, loud and unabashedly, Shane’s smaller giggles joining him.

He leans forward to steal a kiss from him when he takes the roll from Shane’s hand. And then another, simply because of a can.

When they both lean forward to steal their third kiss, a noise outside interrupts them, making both of them freeze in place.

They hear a thud, followed by a heavy, weary sigh.

It’s quiet for a moment where they let their eyes meet, Shane looking like he has seen a ghost.

“...Shane?” a familiar voice asks from the other side.

Shane immediately winces, and Ilya rolls his eyes, not able to suppress his groan at the intruder for which Shane slaps his chest.

Their little scuffle must have been heard outside the door and was confirmation of their presence enough for the sigh to repeat itself.

“I know you two are in there,” the voice mourns.

Shane cringes hard and sighs, leaning forward to hide his face in the crook of Ilya’s neck.

“If you know, then you can kindly fuck off now, Pike,” Ilya calls out, earning another slap to his chest.

“God, you’re such an asshole, I-”

They could hear Pike take in a deep inhale before he spoke up again.

“..23, 24...*Okay*. Shane, look, I’ve collected your things and been searching all over for you. I...don’t think you should go back to the locker room or the team van, buddy, so I brought this for you,” Hayden explains outside.

The reality of the situation feels like a bucket of ice water being dropped on them and quickly sombers them up. Ilya pulls his arms around Shane’s shoulders, who had gone rigid, letting his hand run through the other’s hair soothingly.

“Shane?” Hayden carefully asks outside when the silence has dragged on for too long, and Ilya is all but ready to tell him to fuck off again, no matter the nice thing he just did for Shane, but the other beats him to it.

“Thank you, Hayd,” he says, barely loud enough to be able to be heard outside. Yet Pike replies with a “No problem,” and Ilya allows himself to relax, even if it's just to be able to provide better comfort for Shane.

“I’m gonna leave now. You two might wanna...get out of there soon. *Separately*, if you can manage. They’re looking all over for you, Rozanov. Your coach even came by our lockerroom to check if we were keeping you hostage or something,” the hockey player continues with a scoff.

Ilya rolled his eyes, opening his mouth, but was once again interrupted by Shane awkwardly thanking Hayden.

“Just so you know, this is absolutely going into my best man speech, you crazy kid.” Pike laughs. Ilya actually tells him to fuck off as Shane huffs out a small laugh himself, but by the sound of fading laughter, he probably hadn’t heard him. Oh well, plenty more chances in his future to insult Pike.

“You think they are looking for me to give own interview? What do you think, should I walk out there to show off your love bites and cum on my pants?” Ilya mutters into Shane’s ear, making him laugh.

“You’d like that, wouldn’t you?” Shane hums as he finally leans back to look at Ilya again.

He smiles at him, leaning forward to brush his nose against his.

“*Da*. And I think you would too,” he teases before pecking his lips.

Shane just hums, his eyes sparkling when they meet his, “Maybe I would.”

They both grin at each other like idiots before meeting in the middle for another, softer kiss.

“But not as much as you, possessive bastard,” Shane mumbles against his lips, tugging at Ilya’s tattooed arm before pressing another kiss to his lips with a laugh.

Ilya knew in that moment that they would be okay. No matter what their teams, the press or the world thought of them, there was no reality in which they wouldn’t choose each other

over everything over and over again.

And what a privilege it is to be chosen.

Chapter End Notes

author confirms that the second ilya stepped through that hallway the chorus of "He's my man" by Luvcat started playing in Shane's head and he saw him in slow motion, thats just canon tbh

also this entire sequence was inspired by that specific bts picture of them at ilyas kitchen island with connor shirtless and his arm over hudsons shoulder and the other on the table and hudson in the black shirt holding onto connors wrist, ikyk

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