I was the reason you feel sick inside

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I was the reason you feel sick inside

by sevdim

Summary

Shane and Ilya play for the same team. Shane and Ilya start hooking up. Shane and Ilya start falling in love.

Except... they each think the other has had a girlfriend this whole time.

It would be a lot simpler if either of them could actually communicate.

Notes

Ok the summary is a bit off because Shane meets Rose later on, not from the beginning.

I wrote this a few months ago, mainly to try my hand at writing porn. It's like 3am right now and I'm bored and can't sleep, so here we go.

The title is from the song 'fall in love' by phantogram.

See the end of the work for more notes

It's good, Shane thinks, that they have a regular place to hook up now—somewhere private and growing more familiar with each meet up. And they have done this a good few times now, falling into it easily; they train together during the day, and then, somehow, Shane ends up at Rozanov's at night.

He's careful, though, never staying too late. He's always cleaned up and dressed, out the door by ten. A rehearsed *see you tomorrow* leaving his lips as he walks to his car.

Rozanov gets him off the same way each time. Focused, all-consuming, as if Shane is the only thing that matters in that moment. And he talks. Quietly and to himself, all in Russian. Like he can't help his thoughts spilling out of him, overcome.

Shane shuts his eyes hard against it, tries not to listen too closely. He still doesn't know what he's saying. While the words are becoming more familiar, too familiar, they're still just out of reach.

After, Rozanov always leans in, kisses him, and asks him quietly if he is feeling okay. If it was good for him. Shane brushes it off each time, nodding up at him, saying *yeah* and *thanks*. But Rozanov touches his face, across his freckles, his hand coming up searching, lingering there for a moment longer, before disappearing to grab a towel.

Shane doesn't let himself sink into it the way he did that first night at the hotel when Rozanov had first touched him, hot and new and nerve-wracking, when Shane had been inexperienced and needy, too sensitive to every touch. He doesn't allow himself to lose control like that again, not since he figured out what this was. So when Rozanov comes back, reaches a steady hand to clean him up—his stomach, his thighs, sometimes his face—Shane always takes over, grabbing the towel to do it himself.

Shane tells him once, still catching his breath, that Ilya doesn't need to look after him.

He says it like he's doing him a favour, absolving him of the expectation of post-sex courtesy, like he's trying to make it easier for Rozanov. Taking care of it himself so that Rozanov won't feel the need to pretend.

He doesn't notice the way something shifts in the other man's expression at that. Something small, guarded.

Over the weeks, Shane becomes aware, distantly, that Rozanov is growing quieter. He hopes it isn't because he's growing weary of him, getting bored of him already.

—

Shane is over at Rozanov's again, straddling him on the couch, a hand wrapped around the both of them. Long, slick strokes pulling broken sounds out of the both of them.

"Fuck, Hollander," Rozanov groans, sounding so wrecked it makes Shane's breath catch.

Shane drops his sweaty forehead down against Rozanov's, grinding down urgently. He strokes all the way up on both of them, gathering the beads of pre-come and dragging it back down—utterly obscene. The sensation is so overwhelming that he can scarcely think. He huffs against Rozanov's mouth, murmurs something under his breath, not even fully aware of what he's saying.

"Not yet," Rozanov says, voice low. He must be responding to whatever it is Shane had said. "Not until I say so."

A strained sound slips out of Shane, a painful whimper. He wants so badly to release over the both of them, right then and there. But there is something else, too, this thing they've stumbled upon at some point. How he'd lost his mind the first time Rozanov held him on the precipice. How it had made it that much stronger, nearly undoing him completely when Rozanov had finally allowed it.

"Please, Rozanov—" Shane says, his words falling out of him unrestrained. "Please, please —"

"О боже мой," Rozanov moans into his mouth, raw and uninhibited, the control slipping out of his voice. "Так красиво меня умоляешь." He lifts his hips up against Shane, making him drop forward, their mouths meeting again in a messy, uncoordinated kiss.

Shane feels himself whine into his mouth.

"I know, I know," Rozanov soothes against his lips. "I always know what you need. That's why you need me, isn't that right?"

And Shane is nodding *yes, yes, yes, yes*.

"Tell me," Rozanov orders.

"I need you," Shane gasps, and he knows it's true as he says it. He knows that Rozanov has others that can satisfy him well enough. He even has a girlfriend, with some kind of fucked-up agreement, an open relationship which allowed him to be here, now, fucking up into Shane's hand. And Shane is pathetic enough. "Ah—! I need you."

"Come for me," Rozanov says lowly, his eyes so dark that it almost scares him.

The permission snaps through Shane, and he has to tamp down on a shout when he comes, the spend coating between his fingers. It drips over the both of them, so impossibly hot and also maybe a little bit disgusting. The new sensation sends Rozanov over the edge just a few seconds after, his orgasm hitting just as sharply.

Rozanov holds him there, arms wrapped around him, as they breathe through the aftershocks. He lifts, kissing up into Shane's mouth, only for a few treasured seconds before Shane shifts back eventually. He shifts over to the left of Rozanov, his head dropping against the back of the couch, still blinking away the colours.

Rozanov twists toward him, leaning in again, brushing a kiss along the side of his mouth where he can reach. Shane lets him for a moment, giving him his whole mouth. He has to control himself, though, when he feels he's starting to sink too deeply back into it.

He tears his mouth away, eyes still shut, and doesn't see the way Rozanov chases it.

The feeling settles in too quickly this time—he feels too sticky, and kind of gross with the way they came together. He opens his eyes, and Rozanov is already watching him carefully.

"Is it okay if I use your shower?" Shane asks, surprising himself.

Rozanov's mouth parts slightly, like the question has caught him off guard, too. "Of course," he says quietly. "I'll show you?"

"No, it's okay. I know where it is." But he winces, feeling the need to explain himself for some reason. "Sorry, I just don't like to wait until I get home."

He'd done it over and over by now, wiping himself down as best he could and sucking it up for the thirty minute drive back to his apartment. He doesn't think he can do it today.

Rozanov is watching with wide eyes. "But you've never showered here before," he says in the end.

"Yeah. I don't know. I didn't want to impose. And I don't live too far," he lied, because truthfully it was thirty minutes too far, trying to drive without tearing his skin off like that.

But Rozanov just keeps staring, something vulnerable and uncertain flashing across his face. Shane looks away.

"I'll be quick," he says, already moving.

When he comes back out, he is dressed, hair still damp. Rozanov hasn't moved from his spot, looking at nothing in particular. Shane shivers at the noticeable shift in the air. He shuffles on his feet, feeling a bit silly.

"Um," he says, and when Rozanov finally looks over and meets his eyes, Shane continues, forcing his voice into something lighter. "Thanks. I guess I'll see you tomorrow for practice?"

It doesn't seem like Rozanov is going to respond anyway, so Shane gives a pathetic wave, walking himself out.

—

That shift lingers. Shane notices it in small ways over the next few days. Things that he tells himself not to overthink. Rozanov is still there, always around him, at training, still performing the way he always does. But Shane sees the stiffness held in his shoulders. He notices, most mournfully, the way he doesn't seek him out after, doesn't fall into step beside him without a thought, doesn't talk to him the way they used to—like friends, maybe.

And when they do snap back together again, it isn't quite the same.

Rozanov still touches him like always. Looks at him like everything else has faded out. But there is something tighter underneath it all now. Something that Shane can't make out for the life of him, as he sees the way Rozanov lingers around him, waiting for something Shane doesn't know to give.

After Coach orders them to finish their drills for the day, Shane moves along with the rest of the team to the changing rooms, but he can't help but notice Rozanov's absence.

He doesn't even wait long enough for the team to filter out before he's pushing up and going to look for him.

He finds him in Rink B, shuffling on the ice, not really doing much else.

Shane squints, his brows furrowing in worry. Something is wrong. Rozanov would have been making the most of a quiet moment like this just a few weeks ago. Shane steps closer, trying to get a better look, trying to catch his face. Rozanov slowly attempts a move, something Shane has seen him do many times before, but before he can finish it, he stumbles, catching himself too heavily just in time.

Shane watches as he tries again, and again, and something is definitely off. Rozanov looks unstable, wobbly. Trying once more, Rozanov trips. He goes down roughly, his knees hitting the ice.

Shane moves before he can think, rushing to him. Rozanov isn't even making a move to pick himself up, so he is still kneeling when Shane drops in front of him.

"Rozanov," Shane says, concerned. His hands hover, somewhat lifted.

Rozanov meets his eyes then, and Shane's heart drops at the look on his face. He is close enough to see it properly now. The exhaustion, the dullness in his eyes, stark shadows beneath them like sleep has been evading him for a long time. Shane wonders how long he has looked like this, questions himself on whether he hasn't been attentive enough to notice.

"How long—" Shane breathes. "Are you sick?"

Rozanov shakes his head, bracing a hand to the ice to push himself up with effort. "I'm fine, Hollander."

But Shane knows that's a complete lie. He looks like he is about ready to collapse.

He reaches out finally, a firm hand to steady Rozanov. At the touch, Rozanov falls just a touch closer.

"Come on," Shane says. "You need to get home. Let me drive you home."

Rozanov doesn't argue, leaning into the arm Shane snakes around his side. He drops him onto the bench, kneeling down in front of him, starting to unlatch Rozanov's skates. He is so focused on it that he only looks back up when he feels a hand in his hair.

Rozanov is watching him through tired eyes, unfocused.

“Почему ты так со мной поступаешь?” he sighs. “Почему ты не хочешь меня обратно?”

“Come on,” Shane says, pushing himself up, pulling Rozanov with him. He lugs him clumsily to the now-empty changing rooms, sits him back down in his own spot, moving quickly across the room to grab Rozanov’s clothes, his shoes.

He guides him through his routine, feeling a bit weird seeing it on someone other than himself. Pads off, clothes on, shoes tied. Rozanov lets Shane manoeuvre him, lifting his limbs gently. He has never seen Rozanov this pliant before, this willing.

“Here, put these on,” Shane says, passing over his sweatpants. Rozanov does as he is told, sitting back down once clothed, waiting as Shane unlaces his shoelaces for him, setting them close enough for Rozanov to slip his feet in. He laces them back up.

He feels Rozanov’s hand again, on his cheek this time. He is looking at him so intently, like he is the only thing he ever wants to see kneeling like this in front of him.

Shane huffs a small sound. “How are you this sick?”

He grabs onto Rozanov’s wrist, moving his hand away before rising, guiding Rozanov out of the room and towards the exit.

He is prodding Rozanov awake twenty minutes later, trying to drag the sleep-heavy man out of the car and over to the front door. He is mumbling in Russian again, and Shane has given up on talking to him entirely now, intent on getting Rozanov into bed safely.

“Put in the code.”

Rozanov tucks his face in closer instead, his breath warming Shane’s neck. He mumbled the code, letting Shane put it in himself.

He pushes them inside, leading him straight to his room. He has only been in there once before. Usually, he avoids it. And that one time they’d stumbled there, he’d quickly chickened out, taking Rozanov in hand against the desk instead. That’s how they usually take each other apart—by hand, or, by mouth.

Now he sits Rozanov down on the navy sheets, pressing him back until he is resting against the headboard. Rozanov’s eyes never leave Shane, so clearly wanting.

“Wait here,” Shane says uselessly, heading back out to the kitchen. He fills two glasses of water, brings them both back, placing one neatly on Rozanov’s bedside table, in case he gets thirsty during the night. The other glass he brings up slowly to Rozanov’s lips, tilting it gently until Rozanov drinks some of it down.

He takes the cup away, setting it next to the other glass. Then he's just standing there, a little awkwardly.

Rozanov looks so sweet, with the sheets tucked up over his chest, his hands resting loosely in his lap, eyes still fixed on him.

Shane knows the natural thing to do would be to lean down, to instinctively place a warm kiss to his temple. To get in beside him, keep him warm until he feels better. But that isn't what this is. Shane has been repressing his natural responses this whole time, making sure to keep this thing casual, just like Rozanov wants. Wasn't his girlfriend supposed to be here instead?

He leans forward, but only to grab Rozanov's phone. He places it on the nightstand to charge. He keeps things practical and contained. Rozanov doesn't need him in that way.

"Okay," Shane says after a moment, the words coming out too quickly. "I should go." It still doesn't feel right, even as he says it. It is tearing him up, not leaning down, offering a kind touch. "Will you be okay?"

"Yes. I'll be fine. Thank you, Hollander."

There is something off in it again, something Shane keeps struggling to place. He looks at him for a moment longer, searching for it, but Rozanov has already looked away, something in him closing off, retreating somewhere Shane isn't allowed to follow.

Not finding an answer, Shane steps towards the door, sparing a final look before leaving.

—

Shane decided to keep a closer eye on Rozanov that week. He hadn't been expecting him to come to practice the next day, not after how bad he'd looked. But it made sense, he guessed. Players in the league never really missed practice unless it was life or death.

Rozanov didn't look much better, though.

Placing his skates on the bench next to him made Rozanov look up, and Shane paused for a second on seeing the grey of his eyes, immediately forgetting what he had walked over for.

Rozanov's face eased on seeing him, and he spoke first. "Hollander, hi."

Shane wanted to get closer. Near enough to catch the blue flecks in his eyes. To check for himself if he was actually okay. But Shane needed to pull back before it was too late and this became something it wasn't supposed to be. If he let this go on, he knew he'd find himself falling for him, and Rozanov wouldn't choose him back, if it came down to it.

Shane already knew he was selfish, he kept on taking more than he should.

"How are you feeling? You looked pretty bad yesterday," Shane asked feebly.

"I never look bad, Hollander." Rozanov smirked.

Shane rolled his eyes. "You're not answering the question."

Rozanov sighed, over-dramatically, but Shane saw beneath the absurdity. “Yes, yes. I’m okay. Was a headache, or something.”

It hadn’t looked like any common headache, and if it was, Shane thought it must have been a pretty bad one. He searched Rozanov’s eyes again, like he might find something there if he looked long enough.

“Okay, well,” Shane said, squinting. “If you’re sure.”

—

He met Rose, quite randomly, at Miity’s housewarming party.

“We’re going to be great friends, Shane Hollander,” she’d said decidedly, and a smile had cracked across Shane’s face at how forward she was. But Shane was used to this in a way. It was how most of his friends had come to adopt him over the years, pushing themselves into his space and claiming him as theirs.

And somehow, him and Rose did become friends.

She kept their arms linked for a long while after that, getting him to move throughout the room without really realising he’d even left his spot. She talked a mile a minute, and pulled more out of him than he would usually give. People gravitated towards her, which meant that they gravitated toward him too.

He was aware that more and more attention was being directed their way. But he wasnt really paying attention to anything other than her. He didn’t notice the moment Rozanov looked over, didn’t see the way he went still, his gaze fixed on the sight of Shane with someone new, arm in arm, bent close like they were sharing secrets.

Shane eventually excused himself to go to the bathroom.

He almost ran straight into her in the hallway.

He could tell she recognised him immediately. He felt the hairs on the back of his neck rise when her gaze sharpened on him. She almost looked wrong without Rozanov beside her, Shane thought miserably. They made a pretty pair.

“Oh,” She said grimly. “Shane Hollander.”

He hooked his thumbs into his pockets uncomfortably, still caught off guard. He wasn’t used to hearing his name said in that way, almost contemptuously, like he was dirt on the bottom of her shoe.

“Hey,” he said cautiously. “Svetlana, right?”

She stalked forward, stopping just a few paces ahead of him. He caught the scent of amber on her, something mixed with vanilla. It suited her well. She was so enchanting, even as she stood there staring him down. Shane could understand why Rozanov would want her.

Her eyes were moving over his face, but it seemed she had already decided he wasn't worth much at all.

When she spoke, it was straight to the point. “I don’t know what you think you’ve been doing with him,” she said, “but you need to stay away from him now.”

Shane froze at her bluntness. “Sorry?” he said, a little timidly.

“I can’t alway be here to put him back together every time you decide you’re done with him,” she spat, and Shane shifted back at the words, because none of it made sense.

Put him back together? What did that mean?

Shane frowned, thrown. He had assumed that she and Rozanov would have already agreed to this arrangement long before that night in the hotel. So why was she so upset about it?

“He doesn’t need anything casual,” she continued, her tone entirely condemning. He tried to shift away from it. “And definitely not with you”

Shane was starting to realise that he has massively misunderstood this whole situation.

“Look—I thought you knew about it, already,” he said, slower now, because this… this sounded like she didn’t. Like she wasn’t too happy about what Rozanov and himself had been doing. Maybe she hadn’t agreed to it, at all. Maybe she never wanted to share.

But at this, her brows had pulled together.

“Knew what?” she asked. And for the first time her tone didn’t match the initial certainty she’d walked in with.

Shane opened his mouth around an explanation, but before he could get there, two of the guys crashed through the hallway, knocking drunkenly into Shane, dragging him along with them—something about JJ being passed out, the guys jumping on the opportunity to dress him up. Shane didn’t fight it, he was too out of it still, stuck on her words. He spared a quick look at Svetlana over his shoulder, not able to read her expression before she was out of his sight.

What stayed with him was the nagging feeling that he’s missed something monumental.

—

The pictures flooded the groupchat the next day. Blurry, messy, and mostly useless to Shane. It's clear that pretty much everyone had been completely trashed, not even able to hold still long enough for a proper shot.

Shane wouldn’t care to look, usually. But this time, he clicks on the message almost immediately, already scrolling in search of one person in particular.

His finger paused when he reached a photo of himself and Rose. He can’t resist the smile at it —her hand on his elbow, heads bowed together to better hear one another. He’d gone to the

party with the hope of catching just a moment of Rozanov's attention, maybe even talk to him for a few minutes. He'd given up on that silly daydream half way in when he'd seen Svetlana.

But at least he came out of it having made a new friend. She really did seem to understand him, without him having to say much at all. He saved the photo, and hoped that they would cross paths again. He had been so involved in their conversation that he had forgotten to get her number.

He scrolled again, past pictures of his teammates making out with their girlfriends. Past more and more bodies draped across surfaces, passed out, the longer the night unravelled.

When he finally got to what he was looking for, his stomach dropped.

He leaned forward onto his knees, feeling embarrassingly over-dramatic with how sick he suddenly felt.

It was Rozanov, slumped against the arm of a couch, his legs stretched over Svetlana's lap. His head was tipped towards her, nose buried close to her hair. She was turned slightly, hand on his cheek, a gentle touch.

It was such an intimately private moment that Shane felt like he was imposing. His heart had started beating again, too fast now. He squeezed his eyes tightly shut.

This. This was precisely the thing he had been trying to avoid. He had been so careful, and had thought that that was enough. He felt so stupid now at having been denying himself Rozanov's softness, had convinced himself that it wasn't his to take, as if his heart could tell the difference. And it had ultimately all been for nothing, if he was feeling it all now.

Here he was, feeling jealous like he had any right.

—

Shane had to end it. He knew he did.

The realisation that he'd been jealous over something he'd always known existed in the background of this farce between him and Rozanov—the fact that Rozanov had someone else—had been the last deciding factor.

He'd scrolled back to that photo more times than he'd ever admit, even to himself. Any time he had a moment alone, he brought it up again, fully aware that he was punishing himself just by looking. It had been the last thing he'd seen that night, right as exhaustion finally dragged him under, sometime past midnight.

Shane had been broken up with before, sure. But he'd never really understood what heartbreak felt like then, because he'd never actually been in love with them.

Was that what it was now?

Was he in love?

Even if it wasn't love just yet, it certainly was headed there. Shane had to end it now, before he was truly fucked.

The thing was, Shane had thought he was allowing himself to have Rozanov. To have him in the only way the situation allowed. When really…he'd been holding back the entire time, hadn't fully allowed himself to take it.

God, he wished so badly that he had now.

He thought about all those moments he'd been offered something and he had pulled away too soon. He wished that he'd leaned in too, at least, whenever Rozanov had leaned in first. He wished he'd softened, kissed deeper, when Rozanov had given up his mouth.

What if he just let himself have it—really have it—just once?

They'd gotten this far. He could push away his sense of morality, just for one more night. Leave it all at the door when he walked into Rozanov's place, take what he needs, just get it out of his system, and then end it cleanly after.

Maybe that would be just the thing he needs in the end, so he could move on from this mess with his heart intact.

—

"Fuck—" Shane breathed against his mouth, the next time he found himself at Rozanov's. "Bed. Bedroom. Please, Rozanov."

Rozanov didn't hesitate. He grunted against him, hooking his hands under Shane's thighs and hoisting him up. Shane moaned, feeling heady at being lifted so effortlessly, the world blurring as everything moved too fast already. He never wanted their lips to part.

He thinks they've teleported or something, when his back suddenly hit the mattress.

Rozanov dropped in after him, leaning down to catch the hem of Shane's shirt. He trailed kisses over every inch of his chest, leaving Shane squirming and flushing. When he reached a nipple, Rozanov sucked it in, his mouth soft and careful even as he dragged his teeth over the nub. He licked at it, slowly easing off and drifting back up to the sensitive hollow of Shane's neck.

Again, like always, Shane felt worshipped; there was no denying the weight of Rozanov's touch, the devotion behind it. Shane fought to hold himself together, terrified of breaking down right then and there.

"What do you want, milyy? Tell me, anything," Rozanov panted against Shane's sternum. "Anything."

Shane pressed the palms of his hands into his eyes until he saw white. He needed this. This was the only moment he'd get to ask.

“Can you—fuck me, please,” he said quietly. The words sounded new, unfamiliar on Shane’s tongue. He kept his hands over his eyes, waiting for Rozanov to tell him no. That it was a boundary he couldn’t cross with his girlfriend, and that Shane should probably leave.

Instead, he felt his hands being dragged away from his face. Ilya looked overwhelmed, as though he couldn’t quite believe what Shane was asking for.

“Are you sure?” he breathed.

Shane had no choice but to be sure, because this was the last time he would ever have Rozanov like this. So he nodded.

Rozanov sucked in his lower lip, and Shane ached to kiss him again. As if reading his mind, Rozanov licked into Shane’s mouth reverently.

“I’ll make it so good for you,” he murmured almost mindlessly. “I’ll make it so good, lyubimyy. Moy lyubimyy.”

Shane shivered at the raw adulation in the words. And once Rozanov started in Russian, the language seemed to stream out of him uncontrolled. Shane heard it continue absently, a low vibration that he felt in his very bones, grounding him even as his heart raced.

Every movement was slow, intentional, as if they were both trying to memorise the feeling of the other's skin. Shane knew he definitely was. He wanted to hold this memory for the rest of his life, if he was never going to have it again.

“Will you get these off, for me?” Rozanov urged, waiting as Shane gathered enough sense to be able to lift his hips off the bed, so that Rozanov could pull them off gently.

“Good,” he praised. And Shane felt a profound sense of vulnerability at it. It wasn’t just the physical closeness; it was the way Rozanov looked at him, with an intensity that seemed to peel back every layer of his defenses. He hadn’t allowed it to affect him this whole time, except for that first time, when he hadn’t known any better.

He felt himself starting to tremble. He pinned his arms to the bed, trying to hold still. He felt Rozanov reach for his boxers, and he lifted his hips again, without having to be asked this time.

On seeing his cock—throbbing where it sat heavy against his hip—Rozanov licked a quick line over it, and Shane gasped. “Rozanov.”

Only Rozanov took it in his hand then, and dropped his mouth on him, hitting the back of his throat in one go. Shane wiggled restlessly, a thick groan leaving him.

He reached to grab at Rozanov’s curls, tugged him back up with a sound.

“Fuck–” he said, because Rozanov was still dripping spit over the head, his lips shiny with it.

“Sorry. I can just—I can just fuck you. If is what you want,” Rozanov said, licking his lips.

“Yeah,” Shane said wetly, because being fucked sounded good. “Yeah.”

And Rozanov was pulling his mouth away, just like that, and lifting Shane’s knees up enough for him to shift lower. Until he felt Rozanov kiss the inside of his thigh, pressing his fingers to the muscle there.

“I’ll make you feel so good, I promise,” Rozanov was rumbling against his skin. “You’re going to feel so relaxed. I'm going to get you stretched and open, until I can just sink right into you. You only have to lie back and take it. You want it, don’t you?”

Shane turned his head towards the pillows, trying to hide away. Rozanov sounded near pornographic, and yet incredibly careful and kind, that Shane felt like crying.

He jumped when he felt Rozanov lick at his hole.

“Shh, is okay,” he rambled on, voice coming out manic. “You need me, don’t you, milyy?” he said, but before Shane could take the words in, Rozanov was lapping at his rim, and Shane’s body jolted at how surprisingly good it felt.

A moan left his lips, and warmth was quickly spreading through his body. The physical sensation was so overwhelming—the heat, the pressure of Rozanov’s tongue, teasing its way inside of him.

He was starting to feel smooth as honey, thick and sweet, just as promised. He was almost purring with the attention.

“I’m going to get you loose for me, okay?” Rozanov said, and Shane was nodding automatically, wanting it so badly.

He felt a finger press gently against his rim, barely pushing in. He was already so relaxed, and wet from Rozanov’s mouth, but Rozanov leaned over to the bedside table, dragging out a pink tube. He opened it, letting it drip over his fingers, squeezing out too much at once. The excess dripped over the sheets, and Shane grimaced. That's going to leave a stain.

But his mind was quickly dragged back into his body, when he felt cold fingers playing with his hole, getting it wet. He felt the grease run down, and he felt so messy and obscene with how wet he was.

It should have felt filthy. The thought of Rozanov pushing it all in him with his fingers *was* filthy. Rozanov filling him up with the liquid and pushing his cock in after *was* filthy. But the filthiest part of it all was how badly Shane wanted it.

“Please,” was all he managed, having learnt long ago that he wasn’t above begging for it.

And with that, Rozanov kissed his thigh again, slowly pushing in a finger. Shane felt the breath rush out of him. He thunked his head heavily against the mattress and closed his eyes, completely winded.

Rozanov was soon moving his finger in and out, and Shane was so wet that his body barely fought against the intrusion. Before long, he was pushing another finger in, crooking his

fingers, until he brushed against that spot within him, the spot that had Shane jolting up onto his elbows with a gasp.

Rozanov stole his mouth on a hungry kiss, his own breath shaking with the extent of his own desire, all without having been touched yet.

“Can you take three?” Rozanov mumbled into the kiss, and Shane was nodding before Rozanov could even finish his sentence.

Shane felt the stretch of it. It was so hot and tight that it shouldn’t make any sense. His mind couldn’t work out the logistics of it, even here now with Rozanov stretching him open. He was really shaking now, with desire and a whole storm of his conflicting emotions. He clung to the man above him, his fingers digging into his shoulders, seeking an anchor to hold him in the ‘now’, trying to ignore the looming ‘after’.

“I’m ready. Fuck—just fuck me.”

He felt the loss of Rozanov's fingers before he really understood that he had pulled out. Rozanov was leant over him, still fully clothed, but his face was completely open and bare.

“God. Look at you,” He rasped, his voice thick with sudden, giddy awe. “So pretty. So loose and ready for me,” he said just a he reached between Shane’s legs, a gentle touch to his hole. “You’re dripping with it. Fuck, you’re really here. Hollander—you’re in *my bed*.”

He said it like he really was a lucky man, a man who was holding something priceless. He said it like Shane could have been anywhere, yet here he was, with Rozanov of all people, like that in itself didn’t make any sense.

As if he were tracing that same logic, he added, “But it's me that you need.” The words came out timidly, a statement hiding a question, searching Shane's face for permission like he still wasn't sure.

Shane closed his eyes. Rozanov was raising his knees again, lifting Shane until he was angled just right, and Shane felt the head of his cock against him, slowly push in. He made a low, needy sound.

“Please, please.” Shane’s legs were wrapped around him now, and he was going incoherent with it, trying to thrust up against him despite how weak he felt.

He couldn’t imagine ever feeling this good again—this was the last time he was ever going to have Rozanov fucking into him like this. Shane shuddered at the thought, fighting the way his emotions seemed to crash over him all at once. Need and love and hate and loss and grief, all of it at once.

Despite the intensity of it, a sudden sharp clarity pierced through the sex-haze. The physical release that he was seeking couldn’t quite mask the internal ache he was carrying, anymore. He doesn't know that he’s squeezed his eyes tighter, so tight that it's bordering on painful. He only feels Rozanov pause, his thrusts faltering. He recognises the way the rhythm breaks,

replaced by a jarring stillness. He hears Rozanov's voice again—like an anchor—when he calls to him.

"—llander."

And just like that, Rozanov is pulling out of him. His hand comes up to Shane's face.

Shane blinks his eyes open, confused, because the room feels strange. Rozanov's face comes into focus slowly, blurry. He's close, his eyes wide and intent as they roamed over Shane's face.

There is something like fear in his eyes. He isn't supposed to look like that, Shane thinks.

"Hey, what's wrong?" Shane asked, softly.

"You're crying," Rozanov rasped.

The words landed late, but once they did, dread crept up Shane fast and cold. He raised his own hand to his cheek, to the tender spot beneath his left eye. When he brought his fingers back, they came away wet.

He hadn't known that he had been crying. But now that it was there, tears slipped down the sides of his face, his breath catching on nothing at all. It all seemed to unravel out of him faster than he could get a grip on it.

He scrambled away instinctively, back up the length of the mattress, pressing hard back into the pillows. The tears were only coming harder now, sharp and humiliating. His chest felt too tight, and he was choking on it, trying to get air in.

"Sh—Shane?" Rozanov whispered.

The world seemed to tilt at hearing his name like that for the first time, like he was something fragile to be soft and careful with—and a raw sob broke out of him, and he wrapped his arms around his chest to hold it back.

Rozanov's hands hovered without landing, wanting so badly to comfort but not knowing how. Then, he did reach, a warm hand to Shane's side, light enough to be just right. Rozanov pulled him in, impossibly closer this time. He couldn't seem to be able to hold back any longer, as he drew Shane against his chest, an arm wrapped tight around him, the other coming up to cradle the back of his neck, running through the fine hair there.

But Shane still couldn't stop crying. He wanted to run away. His body resisted against Rozanov's hold weakly, but this time he wasn't letting go.

"Don't," Rozanov murmured, voice rough. "Don't leave."

"Sorry," Shane hiccuped. He had so much to apologise for that the reasons blurred together. He leaned into the low thrum of Rozanov's chest, letting the heartbeat steady his own. For once, he let himself steal this soft moment, and he felt himself drift off, finally, warm in the arms of the only man he's ever wanted.

—

Shane blinked awake at the feeling of a kiss pressed to the bridge of his nose. He scrunched his eyes against the daylight streaming through the window.

Rozanov was watching him, his eyes wide and soft. For a moment, Shane thought this couldn't possibly be real. He thinks he must still be asleep, somehow. But the sheets didn't feel like his own cotton ones, and the pillow beneath his head wasn't the specific brand he'd used for most of his life.

Rozanov waited patiently for Shane to blink away the sleep from his eyes, brushing the tip of his finger over his freckles—starting from his left cheek, over the hill of his nose, and stopping at his right cheek. Shane struggled not to fall back asleep at the soft touch, reminding him of how his mum used to put him to sleep.

"You are like…" Rozanov started slowly, searching for the right words to articulate his thoughts. "A sweet baby, when you sleep."

Shane closed his eyes again. Did he mean for that to sound as soft as it did? Or was Rozanov simply speaking without thinking, his true meaning blurred somewhere in translation? When Shane looked at him again, taking in his sleep-soft features and wild curls, he felt so far gone that it made him utterly miserable.

"How are you feeling?" Rozanov asked quietly.

Right. He'd completely embarrassed himself last night. He'd broken every rule he'd ever set for himself; he'd let himself get fucked, he'd cried in Rozanov's arms, fallen asleep in his bed. He'd stayed the night. Reckless.

"Sorry," Shane said eventually, because he didn't know what else to say to move past it.

Rozanov only shook his head, exasperated more than anything else. But then the sound of Shane's phone cut through the room, too loud in the morning air. Rozanov leaned over to the nightstand, picking it up from where he must have placed Shane's things in the night. He handed it over, though his eyes lingered briefly on the name lighting up the screen.

Of course she was the kind of person who called instead of texted. At seven in the morning no less. Jackie had sent Shane her number almost immediately after he'd asked, and Shane had joked that she must secretly be MI6.

He watched as he let the phone ring out, not trusting his voice enough to answer right then. Rozanov watched it happen, too. And once the quiet returned, he asked, hesitantly, "Rose Landry?"

Shane nodded, smiling despite himself, and despite how exhausted he still felt. "She's great. She's coming to the game tonight."

"Is true then, what the guys were saying?" Rozanov asked.

There was something strained in his voice now, something that Shane tried to recognise, almost touching on it, not able to place it just yet.

“You like her?”

Was Rozanov *jealous?*

Shane was gay. He thought that much had been obvious by now. But then again, Rozanov liked both. Rozanov had a girlfriend. And Rozanov would never be his.

A spark of anger shot hot up Shane’s spine, shocking him into sitting up.

“Rozanov, are you seriously jealous right now?” he bit out.

Rozanov flinched at the sudden shift. He pushed up too, slower, like he didn’t want to make it worse. He reached instinctively for Shane’s arm, but Shane shook him off furiously.

“You’re a hypocrite, you know that?” Shane said, not recognising his own voice.

“Hypocrite?” Rozanov repeated uncertainly, like he was checking he understood the word correctly. Like he was worried he had first learned it wrong. He looked utterly lost, which only made Shane angrier.

“What gives you the right to be jealous?” Shane scoffed once, sharp and humourless.

Because it was laughable, really. This wasn’t fair. Rozanov wasn’t being fair.

Shane turned away before he could say something worse. As hurt as he was, he would never want to be cruel. He gathered up his clothes from where they were folded neatly on the stool, and disappeared into the ensuite.

He paused in front of the mirror, his breath caught high in his chest, and just glared at himself, like this was all his fault. It was his fault that he was still here, wasn’t it? It was his fault that he’d come back, over and over and over again.

When he stepped back into the room, Rozanov was already standing there waiting for him. He reached for Shane again, his anxiety vibrating off of him. But again, Shane pulled away.

“I think we should stop this,” Shane said finally, eyes fixed on the floor. He was supposed to have done this yesterday anyway.

“This?”

“Us,” Shane swallowed thickly. “I can’t—I can’t anymore.”

“Shane.” Rozanov sounded frightened enough that Shane looked up automatically. But even hearing his name didn’t ease the anger still burning hot under his ribs.

So he skipped over his usual goodbyes entirely. He didn’t even try for a smile before walking out the door. He only hoped he’d have enough self-respect this time not to come back this

time.

—

Rose waved sweetly at the camera from the stands, smiling brightly as her face flashed across the jumbotron. Shane smiled too, from where he looked up, still warming up on the edge of the ice.

He deliberately ignored the way Rozanov had glanced up as well, his mouth dropping into something distinctly unhappy before he looked away again, dropping his focus back to a passing puck.

Shane scored a hat trick by the end of the night.

Rozanov spent half the game in the penalty box.

—

“I mean, the way you split the defence on that second goal?” Rose said, leaning across the table dramatically, hands flying all over the place as she spoke. “Actually glorious.”

Shane bowed his head with a laugh. She really was quite passionate about hockey.

They were tucked away in a quieter bar now, Shane having skipped drinks with the team entirely after Rose had hugged him after the game, pressing a quick kiss to his cheek. He had been facing away from the screen when she did it, but he'd cringed as he’d heard the crowd go up in cheers.

“But seriously,” Rose continued, “what happened to Rozanov? He looked like he wanted to fight somebody the entire game.”

Shane stiffened immediately. He shrugged, trying to play it off, but Rose narrowed her eyes at him instantly.

“Okay,” she said slowly, just as Shane expected. “What was that?”

“What was what?” Shane asked, even as tension wrapped itself tight across his shoulders.

Rose mimicked his shrug exaggeratedly, putting on a painfully fake-casual expression. Shane huffed out another laugh despite himself, shaking his head. It was alarming how easily she read him already. Shane felt it in the private bubble around their table, how he could so easily tell her all his secrets.

She leaned in conspiratorially. “Did something happen? Shane Hollander, you have to tell me right now.”

“Rose,” he tried.

“I’m just saying,” she continued, “it really seemed like Rozanov was punishing himself or something.”

Shane coughed awkwardly. “Actually…” he started carefully, searching her face for a moment, “um, we’ve been hooking up. You can’t tell anyone, though.” Somehow he knew she never would.

“Shane!” she squawked, loud enough that Shane nearly looked around to check who heard. He held his hands out, hushing her.

“I ended it today,” he added quietly.

Rose’s expression softened immediately. She reached across the table and took his hand without hesitation. “Oh, honey,” she said gently. “How are you feeling?”

“I don’t know. Angry, still, I guess.” He rubbed tiredly at the back of his neck. “He got jealous over you, which was stupid. I mean—not that you’re not gorgeous,” he added quickly. “It’s just that I’m… I’m probably gay.”

Rose smiled at him then, all fondness. “You ended it because he was jealous?” she asked incredulously.

Shane nodded once. “Kind of. He already has a girlfriend. It just made me mad that he gets to have someone, and I’m supposed to be fine with it. But me having someone else is suddenly unthinkable.”

Rose frowned immediately. “He doesn’t have a girlfriend.”

Shane blinked, because yeah, he did. So he said, “Yes, he does.”

“Does he?” she asked carefully now, like maybe Shane knew something she didn’t.

“Yeah. Svetlana Vetrova.”

“Shane,” Rose said slowly. “No.”

Shane squinted at her, suddenly feeling like he was losing his mind.

“What do you mean, ‘no’?” he huffed, like a kid on the cusp of pulling someone else's hair. They were just going around in circles. Was this what having a sister was like?

“I mean,” she said patiently, dragging the words out like she was spelling it out for him, “they’re friends. They’ve known each other since they were like, I don’t know, teens or something.”

Shane stared at her blankly.

“Shane. Did he ever actually say they were together?”

Shane frowned harder. He’d seen the way Rozanov kissed her at the awards. Seen the easy intimacy between them, the casual touches that looked practiced from years of familiarity. Okay, Rozanov had never technically said it, but Shane had eyes.

And what about the way Svetlana had looked at him at the party, like he had taken something precious from her. Or...was that not right?

“Um. I’ve seen them kiss,” he added weakly. Rose only dropped her face into her hands.

“Okay,” she groaned into her palms. “I could lean over and kiss you right now. That wouldn’t mean we were together. Have you never kissed a friend before?”

“No,” Shane said slowly. Because Shane spent his whole life following rules, and kissing definitely wasn’t something friends did. At least, he didn’t think it was. But Rose looked like she was trying very hard not to grin at him.

“Rose, i'm being serious. I’m pretty sure they sleep together too,” Shane added stubbornly, already hearing how childish he sounded.

Rose made a muffled sound into her hands again. “Yes,” she said finally, lifting her head again. “Friends sometimes do that too.”

Shane just stared at her, dumbly.

“Look,” Rose said more gently now, “I’ve met Svetlana. I sat next to her at some fashion show. She is absolutely not dating Rozanov. Trust me.”

Her certainty hit him harder than he expected. Shane tapped restless fingers against the table for a second before nodding slowly.

“Okay…” he said. But the ground beneath him already felt like it was giving way. “Holy shit.”

“Yeah,” Rose said, rolling her eyes. “I think you two just need to talk.”

—

Shane waits four days before he goes back to Rozanov’s. In that time, he can’t focus on hockey, can’t focus on tapes. He doesn’t sleep at all on the fourth night, because every time he thinks about facing him, something awful twists inside of him—something a lot like shame, maybe. It’s not helped by the fact that during practice, Rozanov barely even looks at him.

His mind slowly rearranges every interaction he’s ever had with Rozanov, shifting until what’s left is something closer to the truth. Which is, horrifyingly, that Shane has been terrible.

He thinks about Rozanov’s withdrawal, going from someone so open and sincere to what he had been recently: restrained, anxious, and impossibly tired. Like what he and Shane were doing had been costing him something.

And then there were all those times Rozanov had clearly been seeking Shane’s touch, and Shane had repeatedly deprived him of it—when Svetlana had still been haunting Shane’s mind, reminding him that Rozanov wasn’t really his to keep.

He had been wrong. He had been so impossibly wrong.

It was never just lust in Rozanov's eyes when he spoke low and breathy. There had always been a tenderness there too, a kind of affection that Shane couldn't deny even then. It was in the way he looked at Shane like he was already halfway gone. And Shane had done that to him.

So by the time he finally stands outside Rozanov's door again, he feels sick with all of it.

He rings the bell for ten minutes, slowly starting to doubt himself for even coming. He even considers punching in the code himself. When he's about to give up and leave, he hears shuffling behind the door. A loud screech, like someone walking into furniture. Then the lock clicks open.

Shane's heart nearly caves in on itself at the sight of him.

He looks… he looks bad.

He's shirtless, a pair of loose joggers hanging low on his hips, but there's nothing deliberately attractive about it this time. His curls are flattened on one side and a little greasy at the roots. Shane feels like he's probably laid his head down somewhere and barely moved for the better part of a day. There's stubble darkening his jaw, which Shane has never seen on him before. His eyes are bloodshot, hazy, like he's either slept too much or not at all.

And still—something lights up desperately across his face when he sees Shane standing there.

"Hollander," he breathes. The relief in his voice is immediate and painful. Shane scrunches his nose against the new wave of shame that washes through him.

Rozanov steps aside quickly to let him in, already reaching for him before the door has even fully shut behind them. His hands land on Shane's waist, too warm, almost burning.

"You should have texted," Rozanov says quickly, words tumbling over themselves. "I would have cleaned up."

Shane looks over toward the counter. It's messy. The kind of mess that accumulates over several days without anyone clearing anything away. There are dirty dishes everywhere, half-eaten takeout boxes abandoned near the sink.

"I can go shower now," Rozanov says, voice rough and hurried. "I won't take long. And then we can—I can take care of you however you want."

Shane opens his mouth, but Rozanov is already kissing him. It's barely even a kiss, just quick restless presses against his mouth, his jaw, the corner of his cheek, like he's running out of time already. Shane can smell the vodka on him, can taste it when Rozanov licks into his mouth.

Shane grips helplessly at Rozanov's wrists, trying to still him for a moment. "Hey—"

But Rozanov barely seems to hear him. His hands are frantic, unstoppable. They slide from Shane's waist to his ribs, then beneath the hem of his hoodie like he still can't believe Shane is really there, within reach.

"We can stay on the couch this time," he rambles. "You want me on my knees? Or I can fuck you again, like last time."

Shane feels frozen to the spot.

"You liked it when I fucked you slow, right?" Rozanov says, a hint of something self-conscious in his voice—the words too rehearsed, too immediate, like he's grabbing for the closest thing he thinks will make Shane stay and throwing it desperately between them. "Or I could fuck you hard. And then you could stay the night. Or—" he swallows hard, "—just a few hours. Whatever you want."

Shane's stomach drops. Rozanov thinks that's why he's here. Rozanov thinks Shane only comes to him because he's a good fuck. He thinks it's the only thing he has worth offering, and not even enough to convince him to stay.

"Ilya, don't," he tries again softly. Only Rozanov's hands tighten on him instinctively.

"You don't have to stay at all," he rushes out, voice impossibly low, like he's ashamed to even say it. "If you have Rose Landry now, is okay. You can still come here when you want."

That makes Shane go completely still for a second. He tugs more firmly on Rozanov's wrists until he stills, too. The apartment suddenly feels painfully quiet.

Shane looks at him properly then, at the wild look behind his eyes, his pupils blown wide and manic. He looks strung so tightly that one wrong word might snap him apart entirely.

With a horrible twisting ache in his chest, Shane realises that this is his doing too. Not entirely, but there's something deeper there in Rozanov, something beyond normal restlessness that Shane still doesn't fully understand. Shane only knows that he fed it—that he very likely triggered it.

Fuck.

Very carefully, like he's approaching a frightened animal, Shane lifts one of Rozanov's hands and presses a soft kiss into his palm.

"I'm not here for that."

Rozanov stares at him blankly.

Shane kisses his palm once more, because he has to make him understand.

"Rose and I are just friends."

"What," he said. Confusion flickered over his face, then something more fragile, unsure. "Really?"

“Yes, Ilya.”

Rozanov seemed to release all the air from his lungs at once.

Shane hesitated, giving him a moment before asking the question that had been sitting like poison in him for weeks.

“Svetlana,” he started quietly, face heating. “I thought… I thought you were with her.”

“With her? How?“

And truly ‘shame’ didnt fully capture what Shane felt right now. “I saw you kiss her, at the awards, after we first hooked up. I thought she was your girlfriend.”

For a moment, Rozanov didn’t respond. Then, hurt was settling fast in his eyes. Shane hadn't come here to add to the hurt. He had wanted desperately to make it better.

“Sveta—” Rozanov shook his head quickly, trying to clear his thoughts. “she is my oldest friend. Nothing has happened between us for long time. We have not touched each other like that since last year.”

“Oh,” Shane said. He actually felt dizzy.

“You thought that I was just…what? Fucking you on the side?” and the words landed heavily between them. Because yes, exactly, thats exactly what Shane had thought. For every second of this, he’d thought that Rozanov fucked him when he wasn’t able to fuck her.

He could see it from Rozanov’s side now, too—Shane pulling away constantly, refusing softness, acting ashamed after every moment of intimacy while secretly believing him to be a cheater, a sleaze.

“Ilya,” he said quietly. He crossed the distance that had grown between them again, and kissed him hard enough that Rozanov stumbled backwards, knocking over an empty bottle in the process. Suddenly Shane could picture the last four days with horrible clarity: Rozanov alone in this apartment, not sleeping, drinking through bottles until his mind quieted enough to let him rest. The image made guilt crawl viciously through his entire body.

He slowed the kiss down, finally pulling back. The couch was in view now, and it was just as messy, blankets thrown across it, Rozanov’s hoodie abandoned to the side like he’d camped there a while.

“You’ve been sleeping there?” he asked quietly, nodding toward the couch.

Rozanov followed his gaze and looked almost embarrassed. “Sometimes.”

Something painful tugged sharply at Shane’s chest. He reached for Rozanov’s hand carefully this time, threading their fingers together before tugging him gently toward the living room. Rozanov followed immediately, with the blind obedience of someone starved for affection.

“What are we going to do?” Rozanov asked tentatively.

“We’re sitting down,” Shane said, just as he sat down first, then pulled Rozanov down beside him. For a second, Rozanov stayed rigid, like he didn’t know what ‘just sitting’ meant when it was Shane who was sitting next to him.

Shane realised then, with sudden clarity, that maybe Rozanov hadn’t needed the sex nearly as much as he’d needed everything around it—the closeness, the touching. Someone staying after.

If he wanted to do this right, he needed to make up for all the care he hadn’t given him until now. So he tried. Unnaturally, and imperfectly. He lifted a hand and rested his palm against Rozanov’s cheek, the same way Svetlana had in that picture Shane had tortured himself over. Rozanov closed his eyes instantly at the touch, a soft breath leaving him like his body was saying finally. *Finally*.

“I think…you only needed to be taken care of a little, didn’t you?” Shane asked, quietly, mostly processing out loud.

How many times had he unknowingly pushed him into Svetlana’s arms, each time he’d left here the way he did. She’d told him that she couldn’t always be there to put him back together, every time Shane was done with him. Shane shivered at the thought.

Decidedly, he shifted further back against the couch, tugging Rozanov down with him until his head rested in his lap. His fingers slipped carefully into Rozanov’s curls, starting to untangle the knots there.

Rozanov only stared at him the whole time, like he was doing something incomprehensible.

“What?” Shane smiled.

“You’re staying.”

Shane didn’t think this ache in his heart would be leaving any time soon.

“Yeah,” he said softly. “I’m staying.”

End Notes

Manic Ilya my beloved

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