

Coming back for even more of exactly the same

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Coming back for even more of exactly the same

by [SatsumaSegments](#)

Summary

Going to the club is the last thing Shane wants to do. But indulging what he wants is what got him here in the first place, and now he has to do his penance.

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This time, Shane does not leave with Rose.

Notes

i have known for some time that i'd end up using something from the modern leper as a fic title. i did not for a second believe it would be for a fic that isn't about mr viktor arcane. anyway go and listen to the entirety of midnight organ fight x

i hope you enjoy this, dear 2+ people who wanted a sequel to part 1

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

Shane twists the shower dial until the water is hot enough to hurt. He rubs soap into every inch of his stinging skin, scrubbing at himself with his nails as if that will be enough to clean away the lingering ghost of Ilya's touch. He stays under the water until his fingertips are wrinkled and the bathroom is obscured by a thick cloud of steam. He washes his body over and over and over again, squeezing out a fresh dollop of shower gel each time he finishes rinsing the suds. It doesn't feel right to get out yet, not while his hips still ache from Ilya's grasp.

If he could, he would stay under the water until he shed his skin entirely, leaving it to rot on the shower floor while he steps out in a fresh new body that's free from hickeys and tense shoulders and complex feelings about Ilya Rozanov.

When he finally shuts the shower off, it's with shaking hands tinged pink from the heat. His skin is raw and flushed, too sensitive for the scratch of his towel and the cold air that floods in when he opens the bathroom door.

He still doesn't feel clean. A mild ache is beginning to settle into his muscles. It's not from the effort of tonight's game. His performance was awful. Montreal's 5-1 victory came in spite of him, not because of him.

No, his body's weariness is entirely unearned, a physical reminder of his decision to let Ilya pin him against the kitchen counter and fuck him until his brain felt quiet.

The worst part is that it was worth it. It was toxic and they were cruel to each other and bile rose in Shane's throat at Ilya's *'I fuck you here or not at all'* ultimatum, but he'd do it again right now if only for the brief, blissful peace that he cannot find anywhere else.

Ilya would've stayed, if Shane had let him.

Things would be so much easier if Ilya really *was* his rival. If he was the person that Shane's Montreal teammates seem to think he is – domineering and disrespectful and only in it for himself. If he didn't stock his fridge with Shane's favourite drink and press soft kisses to the crown of Shane's head and say Shane's name in a way that tricks his heart into feeling *adored*.

Because he's not adored. Not by Ilya Rozanov, anyway. Shane is one person in a sea of many. There are countless names on Ilya's tongue.

Shane reaches for his phone and feels the familiar, pathetic disappointment when there's no notification of a text from 'Lily'.

There is, however, a text from Rose. A picture. A blurry selfie, taken on the dancefloor, followed by 'wish you were here!' and an emoji of a heart.

The timestamp shows that it was sent while Shane was downstairs with Ilya's dick inside him.

For a brief, horrible moment, he thinks he might throw up.

Rose is nice. She's pretty, and kind, and fun to talk to. She shows up to his games when she can, and she's apologetic when she can't. She gets excited about the prospect of going out partying with him afterwards. She's sympathetic instead of cynical when he wriggles out of it by making a lame excuse about wanting to head home and ice an injury or get an early night.

She does everything right. People would kill to be in Shane's position.

In an alternate timeline, Shane is on that dancefloor right now, celebrating his team's victory with his arms around his girlfriend. Ilya Rozanov does not come to his apartment, because he's just an opponent. Shane isn't there to let him in, isn't waiting pathetically at the window for a man who might never have shown up. He doesn't feel guilty for his sloppy performance in the game, so he doesn't take that out on Ilya, poking and prodding at his jealousy until the tension between them is pulled taut enough to snap. He doesn't goad Ilya into sex that's rough and ugly out of fear of what he'll feel if he allows it to be tender.

Something inside him is broken, and the only way to fix it is to keep trying until it clicks back into place.

Shane: You've convinced me. See you soon. I owe you a dance :)

It's the last thing he wants to do. But indulging what he wants is what got him here in the first place, and now he has to do his penance.

Not that he actually did anything truly wrong, he tries to remind himself. He doesn't have to make up for what happened with Ilya. It can't count as cheating if they've never actually talked about exclusivity, can it? Maybe Rose doesn't mind him seeing other people. Surely she'd have said something if it was important to her.

Even thinking it makes him feel gross. It sounds exactly like the kind of ridiculous reasoning a cheater would use.

He and Ilya aren't exclusive either, and he knows exactly how it feels to think about the other people that warm his bed. It hurts like a fucking stab wound.

His phone buzzes in his hand.

Rose: Yaayyyy!!

Shane rubs his eyes with his fists and books an Uber to Ciel before he can change his mind.

Like so much of his life lately, it feels like walking upstream.

—

It's too hot in the club. There are too many people here, the dancefloor a sea of sweaty bodies pressed together like sardines in a can. The music is loud enough that it reverberates through Shane's bones, settling in the centre of his chest as if a firm fist has taken his heart in its grip.

His head is spinning, perhaps from the rest of the bottle of wine that he downed in the time it took for him to get dressed and wait for his Uber to arrive. God, it's loud. He tries to press

through the crowd to find Rose, hoping that the flashing pink lights will linger on her for a second and at least give him a direction to aim for.

He finds her with Miles in one of the VIP booths. She smiles when she sees him, calls him handsome, congratulates him on winning the game. Her dress is adorned with a million silver sparkles which catch the light and glimmer in all directions. It's disorienting, and it's not helping the situation. It would've been difficult enough to look at her anyway, after what he's done.

He lets Rose manoeuvre him onto the dancefloor, not even having the decency to pretend that the prospect of dancing with her excites him. He's never been much of a dancer, or a partier. He's happier when he can stay seated at the edge of the room with a corner to tuck himself into and a table to use as a shield.

He's happier still when he isn't in a club at all. If not for the guilt, he'd be at home right now. It didn't have to be like this. He could've closed his curtains and never spotted Ilya in the first place, or he could've ignored him, and then he'd be safe in his bed instead of shifting awkwardly from one foot to the other while Rose's hands slip beneath his shirt. Her hands are soft and delicate. They're nothing like Ilya's callused palms. There's no instinctive response from his body to lean into her touch or reach for her in return. He places his hands on her waist as if he's following a script.

Maybe this too is something that gets easier with time. If he practises, if he touches her and kisses her and has sex with her the way he repeats hockey drills and gym exercises, maybe it'll start to come naturally.

He shouldn't have anything more to drink. He barely ever drinks alcohol, so the wine has gone straight to his head. It was supposed to bring a gentle, hazy sleepiness, not whatever horrible feeling it's morphed into on the way here. But when Miles returns with champagne, Shane can't help but take a sip. It's too hot to turn down a cool beverage. Besides, his mouth is dry, and Rose will want to kiss him soon. Clubs are for dancing and drinking and kissing.

Shane would've been far better off if he'd avoided all three of those today.

He gazes blankly at the exit. Every nerve in his body is urging him to go home. To run from this place before his eardrums burst and his skin combusts and Rose says something suggestive about going back to his apartment. He doesn't even think he'll be able to get hard tonight. Not with Rose. Not after Ilya, and wine, and champagne.

The lights flash, illuminating the familiar face of Cliff Marleau, and Shane's stomach drops.

Marleau is here. Most of the Boston team are here, now that he's paying attention. But not—surely not, not so soon after—

Shane scans the room with frantic eyes and finds him immediately, his gaze automatically drawn to broad shoulders and tousled curls. Ilya is on the dancefloor too, his shirt half-unbuttoned. He's not with his team. He's with a woman. Or, more accurately, behind a woman, mouthing at her neck with his hands on her hips. Her head is tipped back against his shoulder.

Shane feels sick.

He's in the centre of a vortex, pinned between Rose and Miles as the crowd surrounds them in every direction. The music pulses in Shane's ears and resonates in his throat, his airway closing in further with every beat of the bass.

Rose's hands roam up and down his stomach. Miles's breath is hot against the nape of his neck, his body pressed close enough to Shane's that there's nowhere for Shane to go when Rose cups his cheek and guides him into a kiss. He barely remembers to kiss her back, his lips closed and unwilling to do anything other than stiffen into a frown. His teeth are clenched, his jaw tense.

It's too hot. It's too loud. He's too drunk. Rose is trying to kiss him again, her gentle hands slowly guiding his face towards hers.

Ilya raises his head from the girl's neck and stares directly into Shane's eyes, and Shane forgets how to breathe.

If he stays here for a single second longer, he might collapse.

'I need to go to the bathroom,' he chokes out, and then he's rushing forward on unsteady legs, repeating '*excuse me, excuse me, excuse me*' over and over again as he buffets against a sea of bodies on his way through the crowd.

Shane bursts into the bathroom and almost sobs with relief as he gasps a breath of cooler air into his strained lungs. The door swings shut behind him, reducing the din of the dancefloor to a low, pulsing rumble.

Thankfully, the room is empty. He presses his forehead against the cool tiled wall and wills his breathing to steady and his heart to slow down. His body is out of control. He's still hyperventilating, still shaking, still sweating. Pins and needles prick at his fingertips and slowly crawl up his arms. The ringing in his ears gets louder and louder until it sounds like a constant, high-pitched scream.

Shane wraps his arms around himself and sobs. He's going to die. His heart is going to give out, his blood vessels are going to rupture, his lungs are going to burst. He's going to die right here in a shitty club bathroom and he has absolutely nobody to blame but himself. Maybe it's what he deserves. Maybe this is the only way for all this mess to be over.

He lets out a cry when the door rattles open, his hands instinctively coming up to cover his face. He can't let anyone see him in this state. He doesn't want them to see the moment his body finally gives up. He can't let them down, he can't fail this badly, he can't embarrass his parents like this—

'Shane. *Shane.*'

The word doesn't even feel like his name. The sound of it is distorted, as if his ears are full of water. His vision is blurring at the edges, darkness creeping in like a low cloud over a hill. He lets his eyes fall closed.

‘Shane. Is okay, Shane, is okay. Deep breaths, Shane.’

There’s a rustle of paper towels, the splashing of running water, and then strong hands are holding his wrists and gently prising his hands away from his face.

‘Can you look at me, Shane?’

He can’t open his eyes. He can’t do anything. His body is frozen. Maybe he’s already dead.

‘Is okay, Shane, just keep breathing. This will help.’

He shivers at the sensation of cold water dripping down his spine. There’s a damp paper towel draped across the back of his neck, weighty and grounding. Goosebumps erupt across the surface of his skin.

‘You are doing good, Shane. Will all be okay. Can you open your eyes?’

It takes a few seconds, but Shane manages to un-scrunch his eyelids enough to allow them to flutter open. When the room comes back into focus, he is once again looking into Ilya’s eyes, bright and piercing and wide with worry.

‘Good. That’s good.’

‘I can’t breathe.’

‘Yes you can. We breathe together, okay? Here.’ Ilya reaches for his hands and laces their fingers together. His hands are cool and damp from the paper towels. ‘I squeeze your hands, we breathe in, I stop squeezing, we breathe out. Okay?’

It doesn’t work. When Ilya’s grip tightens, Shane’s does too, as if he’s clinging on for dear life. He can’t focus on his breathing. It’s not up to him, it’s up to his lungs, and they’re no longer functioning properly.

‘Breathe out, Shane—’

‘I can’t breathe,’ Shane repeats.

‘You can, just—’

‘I can’t breathe. I can’t—’

‘Shane—’

‘I can’t. I can’t. I’m gonna die—’

What little air was left in Shane’s lungs is knocked out of them altogether when Ilya frees himself from Shane’s grasp and wraps his arms around his shoulders. Ilya threads his fingers into Shane’s hair and presses their bodies together, his heartbeat steady against Shane’s own.

It's even quieter like this, with his face buried in Ilya's neck. His shirt is soft against Shane's cheek. The smell of his skin is instantly comforting, an anchor in a storm. If Shane keeps his eyes closed and pretends really hard, he can almost convince himself that this is just another clandestine hotel meet-up, and they're okay, and nothing is ruined.

'Good, Shane.' Ilya's voice is low and quiet in his ear. 'That's good. You are breathing slower now, yes?'

'Mm,' Shane hums. His lips brush against Ilya's skin.

'Okay. We wait a minute, then you get a cab—'

No, that doesn't sound right. The solid weight of Ilya's body is the only thing enabling Shane's respiratory system to function. He's not ready to peel apart from him yet. The world is only easy when it's limited to this tiny space within Ilya's arms.

He presses closer, turning the simple contact between his mouth and Ilya's neck into a proper kiss.

Ilya tenses. 'Shane, no, do not do that. You do not feel well—'

'I'm fine.' He's not fine. But he will be if he can put his lips back on Ilya's pulse point, kiss his way down his chest, mouth at his cock over the fabric of his pants. Turn this into something simpler, something his body knows how to do.

'Shane.' The grip in his hair tightens ever so slightly, enough to send a shiver through Shane's body, and he lets out a quiet whine. *Yeah. Harder. Put me on my knees, hold my head still while you—*

'*Hollander*,' Ilya hisses. He lets go of him completely and takes a step back, and tears prickle at the backs of Shane's eyes.

'You are too drunk. You need sleep. I am taking you home.'

Something loosens inside Shane's chest.

'What about Marleau? And your team?'

'What? I am not their mom, they can look after themselves.'

'And I can't?'

Ilya simply stares at him, and Shane gets the point.

'They'll see us together,' he points out.

'Yeah. They'll see me making sure you don't slip over and break your neck. *Hero Rozanov helps rival by losing fucking 5-1 then carrying him home.* Good story for press.' Ilya's voice sounds bitter, but there's no real bite to it.

‘Shut up.’ It’s the first genuine smile Shane has done since before the game.

He lets Ilya lead the way, which proves to be a sensible decision, as he would have almost certainly tripped over the cleaners’ cone that Ilya propped in front of the bathroom door in order to remain undisturbed. Ilya simply shoves it aside with his foot, and they wend through the crowd until they’ve escaped to the solace of the cold street outside.

He only remembers Rose and Miles when they pull up outside Shane’s apartment.

‘Oh, shit. Fuck. Rose.’

‘What, you remembered she exists again?’ Ilya says. His face softens with regret as soon as he says it, his gaze darting away from Shane’s eyes.

‘I should text her. She’ll worry.’

‘Yes, probably.’ Ilya gets out of the car and shuts the door. Shane doesn’t move.

He pulls his phone out of his pocket and frowns at the screen. Two texts – ‘you okay?’ ‘Shane?’ – and three missed calls from Rose.

Shit.

He can sort it out inside. It can wait for the sixty seconds it’ll take him to get up to his apartment.

He turns to tell Ilya to go around to the fire escape, and finds him standing at the building entrance, his finger poised over the number pad beside the front door.

‘What is code? For door?’

Too late.

It would’ve been kind of rude, anyway.

‘Nineteen nineteen.’

—

It’s supposed to feel good to be home. It’s supposed to be a safe place, a sanctuary to protect Shane from overstimulating environments and difficult social interactions and his own spiralling thoughts.

But they step into Shane’s apartment, and before Shane has even closed the door behind them, his chest seizes up as if his body has been clamped in a vice. He can’t be back here again. He can’t be standing in his doorway with Ilya Rozanov. He can’t have abandoned Rose for Ilya again.

He dragged himself to Ciel to fix things, and all he’s done is break them further. It’s like being stuck on fucking repeat.

He needs to text her. He needs to deep clean his kitchen. He needs to have a boiling hot shower and change his clothes. He needs—

The room spins, and he sways slightly on his feet, reaching for the wall to steady himself. Ilya gets there first, slipping a protective arm around his waist and guiding him to the couch. His eyebrows are furrowed. A small divot of concern has appeared between them.

Ilya watches as Shane reaches for his phone again.

‘I need to text Rose.’

He opens the conversation and stares at the messages. He can’t think of anything useful to write. The white light from the screen makes his eyes sting.

‘I don’t even know what to tell her.’ He sounds pathetic, like a little kid who’s stuck on his homework. ‘I can’t—*fuck*.’

He throws the phone down onto a cushion. It lands next to Ilya, who lets out a quiet scoff.

‘I’m not texting your girlfriend for you, Hollander.’

Shane snaps. ‘She’s not my fucking girlfriend.’ The tears that have been threatening to spill all night finally skim his cheeks and drip onto his shirt. ‘I don’t know what we are. I don’t know what’s going on. Everyone wants me to be something, and I don’t know how to keep pretending. I’m so fucking tired. All I ever wanted was to play hockey and every year they want more bullshit. “You have to be a role model, Shane.” “Wear this brand, Shane.” “Keep dating her, Shane, it’s good for PR.” I don’t even feel like a fucking *person*.’

His mouth is moving too fast for his brain to catch up. He doesn’t even know if what he’s saying makes any sense.

‘I’m exhausted. I’m lying to everyone I care about. I’m disappointing everyone else. I’m trying so fucking hard to be *normal* and it isn’t working and— and fuck, I’m *still* trying, even though I know exactly what the problem is and why I can’t fucking fix it. Because I don’t know what else I’m supposed to do. I don’t know what to do, Ilya.’

A sob escapes from his throat. He curls his hands into fists, fingernails digging into his palms.

He should stop talking. He should never have started talking. But it’s too late to turn back now. The words flood into the room like an unstoppable tide.

‘The only time I ever feel like myself is when I’m with you, and it fucking terrifies me.’

Shane’s phone lights up with another call from Rose. He wants to scream.

‘Is okay,’ Ilya says quietly. He picks up the phone before Shane can stop him. ‘I text her. “*Home safe, headache, text later.*” So she doesn’t call police.’

Shane nods. He doesn't miss the way that Ilya's hands tremble slightly as he types out the message.

Ilya places the phone on the floor beside the couch, out of sight.

'This is why you ran away—'

'I don't want this to be just sex anymore,' Shane blurts. 'I don't know how to do this if it's just sex.'

Ilya turns away, his expression strained and sad.

'You are drunk, Hollander.'

Shane doesn't deny it. He knows it's true. The alcohol has stripped away whatever barrier usually keeps his mouth shut, even though the thoughts themselves have been there all along.

'Do you feel...' Shane trails off, unsure of where he is supposed to be steering the sentence. He states a fact instead. 'You were upset about the hickey.'

Ilya doesn't respond.

'If it's just sex, then why would you— it wouldn't bother you. Would it?'

Ilya's lower lip trembles slightly. He presses his mouth into a thin line.

'It does not matter how we feel, Hollander. We fuck. That's all. You said earlier, I show up, I fuck you, I leave.'

'It's not actually like that, though. You don't just leave. You— you make me *happy*.' Shane doesn't even realise that's the case until he hears his own voice saying the words. The last few weeks have been miserable. 'And it's fucking agony. So I tried— I needed you to be angry with me. I need you to hate me, so I can try to stop— so I can hate you too.'

Ilya reaches for the cross on his necklace. He lets out a long, shaky breath.

'You cannot make me hate you, Shane.'

There's a long pause. They sit there silently. An unspoken, terrible thing lingers between them, something that neither of them dares to name.

Shane takes a deep breath. It catches in his throat.

'If we could be something,' he says carefully. 'Would you—'

'We can't,' says Ilya, not unkindly. 'So there is no good way for conversation to end.'

Shane nods sadly and lets his head fall onto Ilya's shoulder. Ilya doesn't pull away.

'I wish things were different,' Shane murmurs. It's an understatement, really. He wishes everything was different.

There's a quiet sniffing noise. A tear falls into Shane's hair.

'Me too.'

Shane closes his eyes and listens to Ilya's breathing. It's slow but uneven, as if Ilya is making a conscious effort to regulate it. Shane's head feels hazy, his thoughts dull and listless after too much noise, too many sensations, too much honesty. His tongue is still at last. There's nothing more to say. Not tonight.

He drifts closer to Ilya without consciously deciding to, leaning into Ilya's side until their shoulders are pressed together. It feels natural, necessary, the same way that a plant instinctually turns towards the sun.

It's not enough. The contact is too light, too easy to lose. They're still too far apart, separated by too many clothes and too much sadness. Shane's body needs something heavier – the solid weight of Ilya's body, the heat of his skin, the comforting certainty of strong hands pinning him in place.

He shifts on the couch, his limbs sluggish and uncooperative. But desire is stronger than tiredness. He clumsily pulls himself into Ilya's lap. The movement is awkward and ungraceful, his balance wavering until Ilya steadies him with hands on his waist.

Shane's head is angled downwards. He's close enough to taste the hint of vodka on Ilya's breath.

'Shane,' Ilya whispers.

It's not an invitation. If anything, it's a warning.

But Shane kisses him anyway.

Ilya doesn't push him away. He kisses back, his mouth gentle and undemanding. His arms wrap around Shane's body, holding him together, keeping him safe from the prospect of crumbling into pieces. Shane clings to him, his hand slipping down the back of Ilya's shirt so he can press his palm to Ilya's bare shoulder and pull him even closer.

When they part, it's only by a fraction. It's out of necessity rather than conscious choice. They're both breathless. Shane's cheeks are damp. He doesn't know when he started crying again, or if the tears are even his own.

He rests their foreheads together and runs his fingertips down the centre of Ilya's chest, slowly reaching the line of fastened buttons that begins just above his navel. He leans in for another kiss as his thumb hooks under the fabric. It's more urgent this time, his lips parting, his tongue seeking entry into Ilya's mouth.

This time, Ilya only kisses back for a moment before turning his head away. It's like a blow to the centre of Shane's chest. He follows, chasing the contact, his mouth finding Ilya's jaw, his cheek, the corner of his lips.

When Shane rolls his hips forward, he can feel that Ilya is half-hard. Ilya's cock twitches at the press of Shane's own erection. Shane cups Ilya's face in his hands, urging him back, unwilling to let him go.

'Please. Please, Ilya, I want you so fucking much.'

Ilya's throat bobs as he swallows. His voice is hoarse.

'We cannot do this, Shane. Not now. You're drunk. You had panic attack. You won't mean it in the morning—'

'It's not—'

'Shh. Please.' Ilya pulls him into an embrace, pressing Shane's face into his shoulder the way he did in the club bathroom. The only kisses he has to offer are for the top of Shane's head, the only touches a reassuring hand pressed between Shane's shoulder blades.

He's not denying him. He's pleading for Shane to stop.

A fresh wave of guilt churns in Shane's stomach.

'Okay,' he mumbles into the warmth of Ilya's neck. Ilya's body relaxes against him in response, his shoulders lowering as if Shane has finally lifted the weight that he alone is responsible for putting there.

'I should go. You should sleep.'

'You can stay. If you want.'

He lifts his head to look at Ilya's face. Ilya doesn't meet his gaze. Shane can practically see him arguing with himself in his head.

'I'd like it if you stayed,' Shane adds, unable to stay quiet.

Ilya blinks slowly and exhales through flared nostrils.

'Okay. I'd like that too.'

—

When Ilya climbs into Shane's bed, he's relieved to find that it doesn't smell like Rose at all. It just smells like Shane. Shane's deodorant, Shane's fabric conditioner, Shane's shampoo.

The day feels like it's lasted for at least a week. It's unbelievable to think that he woke up in Boston this morning and that all of the day's events have taken place in just a few short hours. Ilya feels absolutely drained.

He's sure Shane does too, from the way he climbed the stairs as if his legs were made of lead. The crying has reddened his nose and added a pink tinge to the whites of his eyes.

For at least the fourth time today, Ilya wants to hold him.

As if he can read his thoughts, Shane reaches towards the centre of the bed and links his little finger with Ilya's.

'Night,' he says.

'Goodnight, Shane.'

Ilya stares at the ceiling. He's not even thinking about anything in particular. His head feels almost hollow.

He fidgets with the hem of his t-shirt with his free hand. He's borrowed one of Shane's, an old Team Canada one from the Olympics in 2014. The fabric is soft and worn in places, faded from the number of trips it's taken around the washing machine. The shirt feels well-loved.

The mattress shifts as Shane rolls onto his side. He doesn't let go of Ilya's hand, instead opting to move closer to the centre of the bed so he can keep their fingers laced together despite facing away from him.

Ilya hesitates. Weighs up the options in his head. Narrowly votes in favour of letting himself feel something good.

He closes the space between them and wraps his arm around Shane's waist, his chest flush against Shane's back. He makes a point of leaving a careful gap between his hips and Shane's ass. He does not wish to test whether or not he's strong enough to turn him down twice.

'Is okay?' he whispers into the back of Shane's shoulder.

Shane lets out a sleepy hum of approval. His hand finds Ilya's where it's resting on Shane's stomach. He gives it a gentle squeeze.

Ilya lets his eyes fall closed. He breathes Shane in, trying to commit all of this to memory: the softness of the bedsheets, the quiet lilt of the city noise outside, the feeling of having Shane in his arms. He allows himself the indulgence of placing a single gentle kiss to the crest of bone at the top of Shane's spine.

It doesn't take long for Shane's breathing to slow down. Ilya can feel him melting in his arms, the day's tension finally escaping his muscles as sleep steals him away. It doesn't come for Ilya. He's tired enough that pain is beginning to build behind his eyes, but he isn't ready to sleep, to let the quiet darkness morph into the bright lights and inescapable obligations of the day. He isn't ready for this to be over yet.

He opens his eyes again when he's sure that Shane is asleep. The digital alarm clock on the bedside table reads 4:12am. There's not enough time for anything resembling a good rest, anyway. He needs to be back at the hotel with his team in a couple of hours. It's safe to say he's thoroughly missed his curfew.

And the more he thinks about what will happen in the morning, the more he wants to avoid the inevitable split second of joy he'll feel when he wakes up to find himself cuddling Shane

Hollander, only to remember that nothing has really changed.

It won't change. It can't. This is the closest they'll ever get.

Perhaps it's best to leave and take the memory.

Ilya quietly eases himself out of the bed, pulling the disturbed sheets back up around Shane's shoulders to ensure he stays warm. A cursory search for some notepaper downstairs proves inconclusive. He settles for writing on the back of the instruction manual tucked against the microwave.

Enjoy the hangover.

Text me.

— Ilya

He places it on the bedside table with a glass of water, a packet of painkillers, a protein bar.

He needs to leave. Now, before he changes his mind about the 'text me' part. Before he scribbles out his name and writes 'Rozanov' instead, or declines to add a sign-off at all. Before he has to address the fact that he's still wearing Shane's t-shirt.

After one last brush of the pad of his thumb against Shane's freckles, he slips out of the apartment and into the dark.

End Notes

yeah sorry i was gonna make them fuck again but over the course of planning this out they decided it was best not to. i'm not even in charge of my own house

anyway thanks for reading i love you

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