

Знаешь, я так боюсь (You know, I'm so afraid)

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Знаешь, я так боюсь (You know, I'm so afraid)

by [heyplsdont](#)

Summary

Ilya Rozanov was in love with Shane Hollander. He was pretty sure he had never been more terrified of anything in his life.

Notes

I spent a lot of time thinking about how to include translations in the text but ultimately decided to give y'all the Shane Hollander experience of not having it at all (apart from some minor phrases in Russian, there's a small monologue which is pretty similar to that in the show, but if anyone knows a normal way to include translations pls lmk)

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

Ilya Rozanov knew exactly who he was supposed to be. He knew very well the weight of the unsaid expectations and the pressure of the ones explicitly stated to him by everyone he spoke to. He knew damn well the picture he was supposed to present to the world, and he was exceptional at doing so. That is, until Shane Hollander came along and fucked everything up.

Jane:

'Are you awake?'

Ilya glanced at his phone screen for just a second before putting it aside on the bedside table with a little more force than necessary. Of course he was awake; the jetlag was fucking killing him. And Shane should have known that, considering he apparently kept tabs on Ilya's every single movement. Not that Hollander would ever admit to it, but it didn't take a genius to figure out, since he kept slipping up and mentioning random things about his archrival that he could only know from reading the gossip sites. It was almost cute, in a way. Endearing. Not that Ilya would ever admit to it.

He was used to Hollander checking up on him occasionally. They have long moved from short, straight-to-the-point messages exchanged once every few months. Now it was a few texts every couple of weeks, whenever they both weren't too busy leading their teams to victory. Nothing too warm though, and every message they shared somehow still ended up creeping into the sexting territory.

But summer was off-limits. Ilya was convinced that Shane knew that. He had to know, right? There was no way Hollander could be that goddamn clueless. Summers were for Russia. Summers were for whatever screwed up mess remained of his family. Summers were for everything that could never include Shane fucking Hollander and his stupid fucking freckles.

Ilya groaned and sat up in bed, deliberately ignoring his fully charged phone. The condo provided him with some illusion of privacy, but it was quickly shattered by the untimely text. He wasn't safe. Not here. Never here. And if Shane Hollander couldn't fucking understand that, it wasn't his job to explain it.

Ilya briefly contemplated blocking 'Jane'. It's not like Hollander would even notice. He never texted twice, not until he got a reply. And what's a few more months with no contact? Wouldn't be the first time. Besides, the sex was always more exciting when they were apart for longer. This would be a reasonable thing to do. This would make things safe, even if just a little.

Ilya swore in Russian and moved to the minifridge to take out a bottle of vodka. If he couldn't gather the courage to do what he knew he needed to do, at least he'd forget about it for a few hours or so.

All he wanted now was to be back on the ice, fighting for another cup, another victory. That was the only place he felt he truly belonged. The game was simple. Fast. He didn't have to think about anything but the game on the ice. No lectures from his father, no insults from his brother, no press begging for another piece of Russia's most promising player. Just the game

and the adrenaline that came with the crowd's cheers (although Ilya enjoyed the boos just as much, if not more).

But now, being stuck in his luxurious condo, alone and lost, all the thoughts he tried so hard to keep at bay kept creeping back in and threatening to drag him down into the deep end. Ilya was pretty sure he would never be able to get out if that happened. As much as he liked to think himself in full control of his emotions, the ghost of his mother never fully let him relax. The crippling fear of inheriting not just his father's genetic condition but also his mother's hidden struggles kept him awake at night, especially when he was back in Moscow. Back where it happened. And although he hadn't been in that old, dusty flat in years, he could still see it as clear as day every time he closed his eyes.

He hated being back. There wasn't a single thing apart from his father that could hold him in Russia. He could leave it all behind. Sell the condo, leave his brother some money, get on the plane and never look back. He could have a new life in the US if he truly wanted. Or in Canada, with Shane. Ilya was sure Hollander would jump at the chance to help him. He'd probably start looking for an apartment right now if Ilya texted him. They'd be living close to each other, maybe even in the same province in summer. They could...

“Блять, что ты несешь?” Ilya grumbled to himself, harshly putting the bottle down on the table. Why the fuck was he even thinking about that? Hollander wasn't anyone special. Sure, he was good in bed, and maybe Ilya caught himself looking at his freckles too many times, but that didn't mean shit. It couldn't. And if Ilya still wanted to have a career and any connection to his homeland at all, he'd forget all about this nonsense and call Svetlana.

Yes, that's exactly what he would do. He'd ask her to come visit, they'd fuck, and he'd forget all about Shane Hollander with his gorgeous brown eyes and his cute blush and his stupid fucking freckles and—

“Сука!” Ilya grabbed his phone and opened his chat with Jane. This was safe, he told himself. Nobody would know Jane is actually his supposed archrival. Even if customs asked to see his phone, or if some idiot leaked the messages, nobody would ever be able to tell who he was texting. There were no face or body pictures, save for occasional dick pics he sent, and they never addressed each other by their names. There was nothing incriminating about replying to a checkup message. A simple ‘im good, just jetlagged’ wouldn't raise any questions. Besides, he was alone. No neighbours, no annoying doorman to greet him. This was totally safe.

Lily:

‘Yes. I’m good. Don’t tell me you miss me already?’

Ilya really wasn't supposed to add the last part. And he knew that very well, but there was just enough vodka in his system now to do a few stupid things. Safe, stupid things.

The reply came almost immediately. A little too desperate, if you ask Ilya.

Jane:

'No. Checking up is just a nice thing nice people do. Are you alright? I didn't expect you to answer'

And you really shouldn't have, Ilya wanted to scream. You shouldn't have expected me to text you back when in Russia. You should have been smart enough to understand this was dangerous, more so than usual. You should have known I was constantly under surveillance, should have figured out why I never fucking text in summer. You should have been less goddamn perfect, so that I could resist you for once.

But Ilya said none of that. Instead, he did the only thing he knew how to do when dealing with his feelings – he deflected and turned it around to sound sexy. Sexy was simple. Sexy was universal. Sexy was the language he and Shane were both fluent in.

Lily:

'Well I did. What are you doing now? Hope you're touching yourself when you think of me. I like when you blush'

Ilya smirked to himself, imagining Shane's face reading the message. He was probably in his cottage, vacationing with his family, doing some domestic shit like making home-cooked burgers or watching whatever boring comedy movies Canadians usually watch. Ilya caught himself thinking he should probably learn a bit more about Shane's home and immediately frowned, tossing the idea aside. This was unnecessary. What was he gonna do? Share Canadian culture trivia while fucking Hollander into the mattress? *'Did you know toonies are just a loonie and a two? Are you gonna come for me?'* Fucking absurd.

Shane couldn't seem to find the words, and Ilya stared at his disappearing text bubble for a few minutes before putting the phone down. Sexting Hollander here was probably the worst idea he's had in a while. But fuck, he was horny. Ilya briefly tried convincing himself it was just the loneliness and the vodka talking, but he knew very well the tent in his pants had everything to do with blushing Shane Hollander on the other side of the world.

Ilya was almost going to send another text. He was already thinking of the options in his head, going through all the flirting phrases he could use in English. Life would really be easier if Hollander just spoke fucking Russian (Ilya swore he was a much better flirter in Russian, and it was a tragedy that Hollander would never get to experience his true charisma. Shane swore his English flirting was more than enough to make him flustered).

His thoughts were interrupted by a sharp knock at the door. Ilya jumped and dropped the phone on the floor, swearing at his clumsiness. Maybe that was just a deliveryman. Ilya didn't order anything, but he didn't want to consider the alternative. Not a lot of people knew his address, and even fewer people knew the code to the door downstairs. Ilya really should have known better.

He took a deep breath and slowly moved to the door. It was fine. He had nothing to worry about. Alexei wouldn't care enough to ask him about his clear nervousness. He wouldn't notice his sweaty palms or his fidgeting hands. He wouldn't care about anything but getting his money and throwing in a couple of insults while at it. Ilya could take another slur; he heard them thrown casually pretty much every day growing up. He wouldn't flinch. He

wouldn't show a single sign of being disgusted. For Alexei, this was simply a way to annoy his brother into sending him the money. It had nothing to do with him knowing anything about Ilya's personal life. Or at least that's what Rozanov kept reminding himself of every time he had to talk to his brother. It didn't make any of this easier.

Ilya felt like his heart was about to burst out of his chest as he heard a notification sound coming from his phone.

Not now. Not now, please not now. I can't think about you right now. Please, let me breathe for a second. Let me feel safe.

Ilya was prepared to hear another knock and a series of curses from the voice he came to dread hearing. Instead, he opened the door to reveal an HVAC technician with an awkward smile and a box of tools. Ilya had forgotten he had called maintenance to fix the heating a few hours ago; summers in Moscow were getting colder in the evenings, and his AC still wasn't working properly. He looked dumbstruck for a second, probably scaring the poor man at the door.

He stayed on the couch in the living room while the repairman worked his magic in the kitchen. His hands were no longer shaking, and his breathing seemed to get back to normal. Physically, Ilya was perfectly fine. But his head was a mess of anxious thoughts and worst-case scenarios. But most significant of all was the only thought he'd been hoping he'd never have. He was in love with Shane Hollander, and he could no longer jump at every shadow, thinking it might catch on to him.

His phone buzzed a couple more times before Ilya turned it off completely. He needed a distraction, and he needed it now.

Somehow, calling Svetlana up no longer seemed to be such a good idea. Somehow, he was more terrified than he'd ever been in his life. And somehow, this was all Shane Hollander's fault.

"Not everything is about you, Hollander!"

Fuck. Ilya didn't mean to scream. They'd been at it for a while now, exchanging subtle accusations and not-so-subtle complaints. He hadn't seen Hollander in months and proceeded to ignore every single text message ever since he came to the dreadful realization of his feelings. So now, standing on the roof after another annoying mandatory public event, he was faced with Shane's hurt expression and nowhere left to run. He could, of course, make a break for an elevator and leave Shane alone, but that would mean being back in the stuffy room with a bunch of moderately drunk hockey players and some big names he never

bothered to learn. So, between being thrown to the wolves and talking about his feelings, he obviously chose the former. He didn't get even a few steps in before Shane caught his arm, clearly not satisfied with Ilya's genius escape plan.

"I know, damn it! But you won't tell me what's going on with you, so I'm just left guessing at what the fuck is bothering you. And I can never tell how you feel!" Shane was exasperated. He was so goddamn tired of this chase, so sick of never getting a straight answer out of the man he was pretty sure he was falling in love with. "For once in your fucking life, tell me how you actually feel! Not just that you wanna fuck me, or that you miss my mouth, or whatever sexy thing you usually wind up telling me. Be honest once for a change!"

Ilya could barely catch up to Hollander's fastened speech, his mind still processing the first couple of sentences. Sometimes he hated not being fluent in the only language he could speak to Shane in. He sighed with the realization of his defeat and leaned back against the balcony.

"Блять, Холландер, помедленней можно?" Ilya mumbled in Russian, running his hand through his hair in frustration. "Slow down. I'm not... god, you can be fucking exhausting, you know?"

Ilya didn't consider how it might sound to Shane before the words came out of his mouth. And if he were in any better mental state, he'd regret them immediately. But Ilya's mind was preoccupied with too many terrifying things to notice the way Shane flinched away from him.

"I'm not being an asshole, I have my own shit to get through. Stuff. Important stuff. Needs to be sorted. I can't just... give it all up and focus on you, Hollander. Not how this works."

It took all the willpower Ilya had to mutter a semi-plausible explanation. He was spiralling, every cell in his body screaming for him to leave before the impending disaster finally caught up to him. Before he got honest. Before he said too much. Before he inevitably ruined his life with just three words and sealed off his connection to the place he called motherland. To Russia.

"Then how does it work? Do you want this or not?"

Ilya's thoughts were interrupted by impatient Hollander, who hadn't yet learnt the art of reading thoughts and couldn't possibly know about the internal battle Ilya was fighting. And Ilya Rozanov had never learnt to voice his feelings. He knew very well how to speak his mind from a young age, never mincing words or softening his blows. He learnt to shut up when his father would be coming back from work trips, learnt to read the room and keep quiet when time called for it. Elementary school taught him to fight, not just with words but with his fists too. Too many bloody noses from the battles behind the garages, too many words said he'd rather never repeat again.

But never, not in the harsh Russian winters or in sultry Moscow summers, did he learn to talk about his feelings. Not from his cold father, whose soviet hardening made him incapable of expressing even a hint of sincerity to his family, and not from his gentle mother, who simply didn't have the time to show him what it felt like to open your heart to someone.

“Господи, Hollander, it’s not that fucking simple! Not at all! What do you want me to do? To give up my whole life for you? To become a traitor to my country? To never go back home again just because I wanted to fuck you?”

And there it was again, useless screaming, deflecting, blaming – all the methods Grigori Rozanov used when talking to his son. God, Ilya hated the way he sounded like him, even when he wanted nothing to do with the man.

“A traitor...? Jesus, Ilya, I’m just asking for some honesty here, not your hand in marriage,” Shane’s voice was soft now, almost tender. Ilya wondered what he did to deserve having such an incredible man in his life. “I’m not asking for a big declaration of love or something, I just... I just thought that at this point we agreed this means something to us.”

And at this point, Ilya should have been honest. He should have confessed, talked about how damn scared he was. Shane would understand. Shane would listen. Shane would be gentle.

But Ilya’s hands were shaking now. His heart was surely about to burst out of his chest, and he never fucking learnt how to talk about his feelings.

“It can’t mean shit! Don’t you fucking get it? It can never mean shit. Not for you, not for me. I love my country, Hollander. I will not lose my home.”

The silence that settled over them was overwhelming. Neither said a word for a few minutes, simply staring at each other as if waiting for the other to speak up and make it all better.

“You said there’s nothing left for you there anymore. Not since...your father,” Shane finally managed, his voice soft and uncertain.

“Is still my home. I didn’t choose it, but it is,” Ilya replied grudgingly, fumbling with a cigarette pack. He was supposed to give it up. That, and a few other things. “So if you’re gonna judge me for wanting to keep it, then you can fuck off.”

“I wasn’t gonna judge you. I mean, I don’t fully understand it and I’m not sure I ever could. But this is clearly hard on you. And I’ve been reading up on some Russian history, the propaganda laws and all that...”

Ilya raised an eyebrow. This was ridiculous. Here he was, talking about struggling with his relationship to his homeland, and here was Shane Hollander, that perfect motherfucker, being perfect as usual. He wanted to say so many things. *Я люблю тебя. Ты – лучшее, что со мной случилось. Я скучал. Я так сильно боюсь, что всё испорчу. Мне страшно. Я боюсь, что один неверный шаг разрушит мою жизнь. Я умираю без тебя, и я был бы готов прятаться всю жизнь, лишь бы не потерять тебя. Я не знаю как долго я смогу совмещать любовь к своей стране и чувства к тебе. Мне страшно. Я люблю тебя. Я люблю тебя, и я никогда не боялся ничего сильнее. Кажется, я был бы готов бросить всё ради тебя. Я задумывался над переездом в Канаду. Я продал квартиру в Москве. Я был готов никогда больше не вернуться. Я был готов попрощаться с Россией навсегда. Мне страшно. Мне страшно, и я никогда тебе этого не скажу. Прости меня, моя любовь.*

But Shane wouldn't understand any of it. So, Ilya did what he always did when dealing with too many feelings and a language barrier. He smirked and pretended it was all okay.

"You've been reading about Russian history? Hollander, you could not get any more boring." Ilya muttered, deflecting once again. Nothing like a good old-fashioned rivalry to steer the conversation away from his feelings.

Shane blushed, and Ilya could swear he was a second away from pinning him to the wall and kissing him. God, how could anyone be so fucking perfect?

"Hey, I wanted to get to know you better. To understand why you... Why you feel the way you do," Shane's cheeks were burning red now, and he turned away to glance at the scenery in front of them. The view was pretty. If he wasn't so obsessed with Rozanov, he might have even enjoyed it.

"Feel the way I do? Like what?" Ilya sounded almost defensive, his words coming out harsher than he intended.

"Scared. I meant, scared," Shane replied quietly and grabbed the balcony with his hands. "Don't worry, you hide it well usually. Just not when we're alone".

Ilya turned his head sharply and frowned. What the fuck was that supposed to mean? Has he really been that obvious?

"Don't know what you're talking about," Ilya denied firmly. "Is stupid. I'm just not you. I don't have a perfectly boring family who are nice and accepting. I don't have a nice fucking home, I don't have a fucking pride march every June, I don't have a fucking freedom, I don't have shit! I'm just... not you."

"You don't have to be me. That's not why I..." Shane trailed off, seemingly realizing he was about to say something he might regret later. "I'm sorry you don't have someone to get home to. I wish... I wish I could invite you over for Christmas. My mum makes the best roast beef."

Ilya let out a laugh, suddenly feeling stupid. He was trying so damn hard not to feel anything for this insanely boring Canadian, but every single thing that came out of his mouth only made Ilya fall harder and harder.

"I'm sure she does. But I don't think your mum could make a great холодец or a killer селедка под шубой," Ilya noted, not bothering to think of a translation. "You would hate it."

Shane stared at Ilya intensely, his expression suddenly way too serious for a conversation about Christmas dishes.

"Gonna drill a hole in me, Hollander," Ilya tried for a joke, but it wasn't quite heartfelt. Something in Shane's face made it hard for him to act as nonchalantly as he tried to.

"I was serious. About Christmas," Shane finally spoke up, taking Ilya's hand into his. "Don't stay with the team. Come to Ottawa. Come to my parents' place. You don't have to spend

another holiday season alone.”

“I was never alone. Marlow let me stay with his incredibly nosy family last season,” Ilya protested. “Was annoying. His niece made me put on makeup. I looked an idiot.”

Shane let out a quiet chuckle. They both knew Ilya loved babysitting.

“Well, I can save you from this torture this Christmas. Come to my home, Ilya. Come see my family.”

“And what you gonna tell them? ‘I got so sad for Rozanov so took pity on him and brought him home like a kicked puppy’?”

“Well... You’re more like a cat, if anything,” Shane shrugged casually. “I... I thought a lot about this. I know you can’t come out. Not to anyone. But I trust my family. And I... I actually came out. Last week. More accidentally than anything, but they took it well. You’re the reason, Ilya. The only reason I ever found the words to say it, the reason I thought now was the good time. You’re... Sorry, I’m not good with words right now.”

Ilya shook his head, processing Shane’s revelation.

“My God, you Canadians apologize for every fucking thing,” he grumbled, though there was no bite to his words. He just needed a minute to gather his own thoughts. “That was... that was brave, I guess. Good for you”.

“Good for me? That’s all you got to say? C’mon, I’m practically pouring my heart out and you’re not even gonna ask how I...”

Shane didn’t get to finish that sentence. Ilya pressed him against the nearest wall, and nothing mattered anymore. He kissed him like it was the last time they’d ever get to do that, like he would fight anyone who dared separate them in this moment. And if Shane knew anything about Ilya, he probably would.

“Я люблю тебя,” Ilya whispered against Shane’s lips, his hands desperately roaming over his buttoned suit jacket. “Я люблю тебя, я люблю тебя...”

Shane didn’t need a translation for that one. He looked it up one day in a desperate hope he might get to confess to Ilya one day. Doing it in his native language seemed like the right thing to do. But Ilya clearly beat him to it, though Shane didn’t seem to mind. He’d only ever heard it said by a mechanical voice in his translator app, but nothing could prepare him for how incredible it would sound from Ilya’s lips. Rozanov would never let him hear the end of it if he knew the things lover-boy Shane was planning to do.

“Ya lyublu tebya to.. Toze? Toz.. toz...”

Ilya laughed then, grinning like the happiest man on earth.

“Тоже. But close enough,” he winked, grabbing Shane’s hand. “And I’ll come for Christmas. As long as you promise to show me all the voice memos of you attempting to learn three words”.

“Shut up. I don’t have these,” Shane mumbled. He definitely did, probably more than a dozen. He liked to be thorough.

Ilya just smiled and brought Shane’s hand to his lips.

Ilya Rozanov was in love with Shane Hollander, and he had never been more terrified of anything in his life. And somehow, he knew Shane Hollander would one day make him admit to that particular emotion out loud. But one feeling at a time.

End Notes

*The song this was inspired by is «Я так Боюсь» by Pornofimy

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