To Be Bored is To Be Loved

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To Be Bored is To Be Loved

by WhiteSocksAndaMole (SKZkingBin)

Summary

"What's your favorite Russian word?" Ilya sits with his legs caging Shane in from behind, softly kissing the freckles behind his ears and down his neck.

"***You***." Shane doesn't hesitate or have to think about it. It's so simple, yet it means just about everything to him. "Without you I wouldn't have a reason to love anything else." His head tilts to say, angling awkwardly as he does his best to face Ilya and gauge his reaction. It's subtle, but the twitch on the corner of his lips is enough for Shane to lean forward and press a kiss on Ilya's cheek. "Boring, right?"

AKA... **Ilya has something very important to ask, and Shane couldn't be more prepared to answer him.**

Notes

Hi there!

I fear the gay hockey bug has hit me too, so I'm taking a mini break from SKZ to bring you fluffy Hollanov. This is 5 years after episode 6 and Hollanov is quite obsessed with each other & that's honestly all that matters here.

Anything that is both italicized and bold will be in Russian, so keep that in mind as you go.

Happy reading!

See the end of the work for more notes

Shane is not at all freaking out, he's fine.

This is totally fine just like he is. And his leg is only shaking from the amount of ginger ale he has downed already, he just needs a quick bathroom break, that's all. He didn't want to start drinking alcohol before their food arrived, but maybe his leg wouldn't shake so much if he did. And maybe he would feel better about pressing the call button he so anxiously hovers over.

"I'm sorry I'm late." Ilya's voice booms over loud music, Shane momentarily wondering if he had gone senile already. Ilya's steps are big, covering more ground as he crosses the large restaurant to reach their usual table. He's standing across from Shane by the time the athlete is blinking up to follow Ilya's frantic apology. "I'm so sorry, Shane."

"It's okay, Ilya." Shane smiles, blinking back a level of fondness that often appears only when Ilya is on his mind. Which has been daily as of late… at least for the past decade. "Really."

"I got—" Ilya takes a sharp inhale, clearly needing to catch his breath now that he has come to a complete stop.

Shane laughs.

He gets out of his seat to meet Ilya's eyes, reflexively reaching for his flushed cheeks to wipe at the thin sheen of sweat that had started accumulating. "Ilya." Shane's thumb crosses his chin, holding him still when he presses a chaste kiss on him. Ilya waits until that moment to exhale, as if physically letting go of the weight of his actions now that he's here and Shane doesn't look as upset as he expected.

"I got you flowers." Their foreheads are pressed against each other when Ilya speaks up again, his voice now sounding less frantic. He hums at the touch of Shane's hand still holding him, bringing forward his hidden arm to press said flowers in between them. Unwilling to separate enough to make space.

Shane shakes his head in amusement, his heart reacting with a sense of urgency as he looks down and locks in on the most beautiful arrangement he had yet to set eyes on before.

The past 30 minutes were spent in silence. Shane locking and unlocking his phone in anticipation of something, *anything,* to remind him of Ilya's existence. His boyfriend had

been less responsive than usual all day, and although Shane's mind insisted showing up without a final confirmation was borderline idiotic, he's glad he did.

And he's especially glad he stayed and waited.

"I ordered for you, I hope that's okay." Shane pulls back to say, his eyes refusing to meet Ilya's anymore. Lest he reveal how touched he really is, the sting behind his eyes becoming harder to mask.

"More than." Nuzzling into his side, Ilya's touches are intentional. He's quick to move the bouquet down into a spare chair, taking the opportunity to fully embrace Shane into a suffocating hug. "Thank you for waiting." His lips trail specks of soft brown, taking his time to kiss every last freckle he can reach. Ilya is gentle— moving as if they're home alone… as if they were never afraid of such a public act. The weight of his lips makes Shane feel less dizzy, his heart calming and leaning further into each touch.

There's little effort required for their lips to meet, Shane reaches for Ilya's hands, feeling how cold they still are and choosing that to focus on. "I love you." Shane says against Ilya's lips, kissing him again and again until his eyes aren't so heavy and his heart follows suit.

"I love you more." Ilya nods, presumably to himself as Shane finally takes the opportunity to open up, falling for the sea of blue-green that has held him captive for as long as he could remember. Everything is okay now.

Shane can breathe again, and he can especially feel again. Thanking Ilya for always sticking to his word, even when it doesn't benefit him.

New York winters have grown to be something special for Shane, and now feels no different.

Getting to spend a few days away from the ice together is one thing, but managing to align with the holidays is another (more special) thing. The city is always beautiful and bright this time of year, often keeping Shane wide awake as he admires the skyline long after Ilya has gone to bed.

Shane is absentminded, but happy. He always gets like this after a good day, following the familiar path back to their apartment with Ilya trailing close enough to not lose track of. His presence is unwavering, even after all these years.

“Shane.” Ilya calls to him. His voice only above a whisper as he watches the man hum and pull on their connected hands, letting him take the lead for a while. “Baby.” He tries again, tugging on Shane’s hand with a little more intention than before. It’s enough to make Shane turn around, eyebrows raised and his smile frozen in place.

He’s quite happy, stopping in his tracks to make sure Ilya can finally catch up.

“Hi.” Shane tucks his arm up to his chest, hugging his flowers tight enough to make Ilya snort. Typical Shane and his predictable behaviors.

“We’re in no rush, right?” Ilya palms Shane’s face, thumbing away the soft white flurries periodically falling on his cheeks. It’s not as cold as it often gets when they’re home, but it’s enough to make their cheeks flush and their noses bright. “I want to go somewhere with you.” It feels like a question, one not intended for Shane to answer, yet he does anyway. Nodding as his tongue swipes across his bottom lip, smiling even harder at the way Ilya suddenly finds it impossible to maintain eye contact.

“Where are we going?” His shoulders come up, intrigued and curious where else he and Ilya could end up so late in the evening. Quickly realizing the error of his ways when the bustle of a sleepless city reminds him of exactly where they were.

Ilya chooses that moment to tighten his lips, shaking his head in lieu of answering the sea of questions that is soon to come. After knowing Shane for what feels like an eternity now, Ilya doesn’t bother saying much else. It’s often the fastest way to shut him up.

“When is last time you skate for fun?” Ilya is tying his laces when he asks, watching Shane freeze — conflicted — between freeing his hands to put his skates on, and missing out on the activity as a whole.

“Mmm right before high school?” He thinks, blinking rapidly as he conjures his memories to the forefront. Wondering precisely *why* it has been so long for him. And why Ilya of all people is the first to notice and rectify that. Though he seems to be the exact person Shane would prefer to share all of his moments with.

Ilya doesn’t say much else, nodding in understanding as he moves down to his knees. “Hmm.” He hums softly, helping Shane out of his shoes before he can ask. His actions are gentle, and if Shane had to really think about it, Ilya has always been that way. Even when

their bodies were the only thing they shared with each other, Ilya has always taken care of Shane.

Long before Shane too realized he wanted that.

Skating has been ingrained into his entire body, so Shane doesn't notice when they're finally on the ice. He feels at home even when the stage is small, and the crowd is nonexistent. Facing Ilya as he does now is nothing out of the ordinary, it's why ice still feels romantic, and why the sound of a dropped puck makes his skin prick with excitement.

"Is this okay?" Ilya reaches for Shane's hand, pulling his gloves off to properly touch him. It's hard to ignore the way Shane's heart leaps at the action and his knees lock in place. He doesn't want this moment to end, and it has barely started.

"Perfect." Shane remembers to answer, trying his best to not overthink and take something so nonchalant to heart. He's certain Ilya only remembered how close their apartment was to Central Park as they were leaving the restaurant. It's nothing more than pure coincidence, and a free weekend aligning perfectly for them.

Their coats are thick, but Shane feels it all. Melting at the squeeze his waist receives when they stick together. He rests his head in the crook of Ilya's neck, nuzzling in the inviting heat of his scent and warm body. He's everything Shane never deserved to dream of.

Strong arms and a gentle voice whispering into his ear like nothing in the world matters beyond this… beyond the sway of their hips, and the music moving them along the ice. Shane doesn't want to overthink, but he can't help it.

He can't help romanticizing everything they get to share together now. Their charity expanding to New York was planned years in advance, and as much as Shane tries to think past it, he can't help wondering if he could've had *this* without that. If he could've held Ilya in his arms and listened to Russian words spill out of his mouth without a care. If he could've leaned back and stared into Ilya's eyes just moments before soft lips connect with his.

Shane always thought Ilya would be too afraid to lose everything —to never have a home— if they so much as thought about being together. As time went on and Shane opened his eyes more, he learned quickly how *he* was always the scared one. The one plagued with noncommittal thoughts to protect the perfect life he had built. The perfect life that was sad and unhappy before Ilya… before real perfection became a possibility. *Together.*

"You're thinking too much." Ilya bites Shane's lip to say, kissing him one, two, five more times before Shane can dissect what's being said and overthink again.

“Sorry.”

“S’okay. I like that you think too much.” Ilya smiles, his hand coming up to hold Shane’s jaw in place. He’s so… *captivating*. Making Shane’s head spin when he kisses him again. Harder, more intentional this time. Ilya always knows what he wants, and while Shane agonizes over when and how to ask for what he wants, Ilya is already giving it to him by then.

“**Please evacuate the rink. Ice cleaning will begin in 15 minutes. Find your nearest exit and proceed to it safely**.”

The announcement is hard to miss despite the loud laughter and yelling at each other. The rest of the world had been forgotten long ago, so it’s almost impossible to snap Shane back into reality until the sudden request. As disappointing as it feels to have to walk away, he’s glad they did this. That Ilya wanted to share this moment with him. Shane won’t admit to being a sore loser during their numerous competitions, but he can admit to how much fun the last hour has been.

His younger self would be happy. Proud, even.

“One more.” Ilya pulls Shane back into his arms, keeping him from moving away so soon. His eyes droop, and his mouth falls into a big pout. He’s irresistible, easily distracting when it comes to Shane. The music feels familiar, but not enough to steal Shane’s focus when Ilya spins him around.

“But we have to g—” Shane’s sentence is cut short. His lips find something else to do instead, welcoming the pointed way Ilya kisses him without warning. Maybe he can wait just a little bit longer, they won’t mind. It’s just one kiss, what could go wrong? “You’re terrible.” He chuckles into Ilya’s mouth, kissing him back again and again.

“Just the worst.” Ilya affirms with a big smile, making no effort to pull away or leave like promised. Shane’s skates slip, his weakening knees sending him dramatically falling into Ilya’s arms and down into the cold ground.

He doesn’t get to apologize or self-deprecate even for a moment, Ilya taking the opportunity to kiss him like it’s the last he’ll get to. He’s so careful, his lips matching perfectly with Shane’s as always. Ilya has gotten it down to a science, even the way he pulls back just as Shane is opening up to whatever else he may be planning.

“Up up you go!” Ilya moves around to help Shane get back on his feet, stumbling down to his knees again in seconds. It’s almost cartoonish how easily Ilya falls. Shane would never admit

it directly, but Ilya has always been the best skater he has ever met, so his constant fumbling is certainly out of character, but amusing enough to earn a loud laugh from Shane. One that makes his head fall back and the dimples above his cheeks to sink deeper than usual.

Taking the moment to laugh while Ilya dusts himself off and lifts one leg up to step on the ice, Shane tones his teasing down just long enough to observe. His head tilts in curiosity, brows furrowing as he soon realizes what's happening. "Are you hurt, do you need help?" He reaches for Ilya's hands, watching the cold digits tremble in his hold. It was so dumb, they should've kept their gloves on earlier. Shane wonders why they did it, why fleeting moments of intimacy were so important to now make his boyfriend visibly shiver. He should've known better and listened to his instincts when they mattered.

"So you remember all those years ago when you said I should find someone I like? Someone I would want to marry even if it was for passport?"

"Sure, but you don't need that anymore, you're already a citizen." Shane frowns, watching as his hands start to mirror Ilya's— trembling as he anticipates where the rest of their conversation goes.

Shane often wishes he could forget parts of their past entirely… parts that made him look weak and too vulnerable to Ilya. Parts that often make him wonder why he stayed. Why Ilya still wanted anything to do with him afterwards. That particular night often comes to mind as a part of himself that Shane would be okay never knowing.

"Exactly. So know that when I do, I'm doing it because I want to, yes?" Ilya isn't asking. Shane knows that well enough, and it's no surprise when his lips tremble in response. Shane's eyes start to burn, unable to blink away the bubbling anger threatening to ruin their date. They were having a great night, Ilya has no right to bring up women in this moment that was meant to be his. He wants to dispute it, and insist that he doesn't have to. That Ilya doesn't *need* to marry any… "Will you marry me?"

Shane's heart stops.

The wetness around his eyes worsening in complete realization. He had it all wrong from the very beginning, and here he is getting everything he wanted before he could even ask for it. "Ilya." Shane can't breathe, everything seems to malfunction all at once, and all Ilya can do is smile. His handsome face stares up and waits, patiently there as he always is.

"You made me realize I could have a family that actually loved me beyond what I could do for them. That I never had to go back to the place and people who only wanted to hurt me. And I know I'm a few years early, but I don't know if I can wait. I don't want to hide or marry you after we retire anymore, I want to win my next cup and thank my husband for always being there for me. For being the reason I learned what love really meant in its most unconditional form. I want you, Shane. Forever, this time." Ilya's nose is bright red, almost

matching the lips now quivering as they hold back from complete vulnerability. He still pretends to be strong, waiting patiently for something. For Shane to stop crying before he does too.

“Unconditional? God, you’re so…” Shane hiccups, choking through a laugh as his words escape him by the minute. The longer he stares down— embracing the smile beaming up at him. He’s pretty. Ilya feels more beautiful than Shane has ever seen him. “Such an a—” he sobs, his free hand coming up to cup his face and hide. Shane hates how easy it is to reduce him to something so incoherent, especially in such a public setting.

“What, asshole?” Ilya smirks, his light scoff feigning a level of strength and nonchalance he doesn’t quite possess in the moment. His hands shake, and Shane sees, really noticing him as he blinks his tears away to laugh… snorting loudly at his boyfriend. And after all these years, Ilya has yet to change. Yet to stop hiding the way his eyes dart back and forth in absolute uncertainty.

Shane wipes at his eyes, reaching for Ilya’s biceps to drag him up. He’s back on his feet in seconds, their eyes meeting and *knowing* of the answer already. Shane has yet to give one, but Ilya’s smile is enough to know. “Amazing man.” Shane breathes, palming Ilya’s cheeks. He’s caressing the soft skin, trembling fingers gliding across a chiseled jaw to hold the man steady and *close*. “You’re fucking amazing, and I love you.”

“Not enough.” There’s a brief moment of silence, a moment where Ilya blinks in fear. As if Shane would ever want anything else. “You told me not to marry Sv—” the remainder of his sentence never sees the light of day, Shane taking that moment to kiss Ilya. He’s greedy for attention, for every thought in Ilya’s mind to only contain him —*them*— for as long as he can help it.

“You’re insufferable.” Shane pulls away to say, kissing Ilya just as he reaches for his waist.

“How do you make proposal boring?”

“How else will I know you really want me? Forever, like you say.” Shane feels his lips chap. He’s smiling too hard now, and the cold weather nearly makes them crack. “***I will, Rozy. Of course I will marry you, baby.***” He finally says, heart racing loud enough to make it unbearable. Shane can barely catch his breath before he’s suddenly in the air and in his newly appointed fiancé’s arms, twirling around in a way far too dramatic for either of them to admit enjoying.

“I love you.” Ilya sniffs, his tear-streaked face nuzzling into the crook of Shane’s neck when he comes to a stop, unwilling to let him go just yet. “I love you so much.”

“Is this how you thought your night would end?” Ilya is finishing his treat as he swings their connected hands, clearly trying to not look as excited as he feels. His fingers twitch between Shane’s, his smile yet to wipe off since they left the rink and went on to their next destination. Shane hasn’t been able to keep his eyes off his fiancé since, admiring the way Ilya’s eyes seem to look at him in a way he hadn’t before. There’s a fear that always hid behind his teasing and carefree persona, yet for the past half hour, Shane had yet to catch that. It makes his stomach twist; his insides feeling warmer than the weather and never-ending snow would suggest.

Shane softly bumps into Ilya’s shoulder, trying his best to keep things lighthearted. He knows himself, he knows how suffocating even the most unserious moments can become because of him. “Not at all. I thought maybe we’d hold hands as we quietly walk home then fuck a few times before passing out.” He shrugs, taking the last couple of bites left of his ice cream cone. It would seem questionable to stop for such a treat in this weather, yet it absolutely makes sense for Shane and Ilya. Ice cream on the coldest day of the year quickly became one of Shane’s favorite things to sneak out for. It was (often) only when he and Ilya played against each other, yet as the years progressed, it seemed to become an integral part of their evenings at least twice every season.

“Wow.” Ilya laughs, shaking his head as he moves to let Shane’s hand go. He can be quite dramatic, and Shane finds that amusing. “And to think I went from clubbing every night to *this*.” He points to nothing in particular.

“Do you regret it?” Shane slows to a complete stop to ask, turning to face Ilya and take in the soft reactions he often thinks are unnoticeable. He couldn’t be more transparent.

Ilya reaches back for Shane’s hand, bringing it up to his warm lips, pressing soft kisses on the ring that finds a way to sparkle almost blindingly even so late in the evening. “Not even for a second.” Ilya says, speaking as if he’s telling Shane’s hand, asking it to keep his secret lest the man behind it becomes too cocky. “My favorite part of traveling is coming home to you.”

“I see.” Shane wants to scream in victory. He wants to gloat and obnoxiously laugh in Ilya’s perfect face, to tell him he’s so easy to brainwash for his bidding, but he chooses not to. Instead, Shane shrugs, nodding his head as if that didn’t just make his entire week more lovely.

“Look at you, you’re happy aren’t you?” Ilya guffaws, pointing at the smile Shane thought he hid well, realizing only then that maybe trying to play each other doesn’t always work. Not when Ilya can see right through him too. “So easy baby.” He chuckles, pulling Shane’s hand fast enough to tug him forward. Ilya doesn’t say anything else as he tucks their connected hands into his jacket pocket and turns back to the street, resuming their short trip as their highrise soon comes into view.

“I was thinking…” Shane looks up at the red arrow blinking as it points up, wondering how much longer this elevator is going to take if the number keeps moving so slow.

“No.” Ilya shakes his head, his curls bouncing in the reflective doors that Shane faces forward to watch. “Stop doing that.”

“Why?” He chuckles, biting back more amusement at the pout Ilya manufactures. He can be so dramatic.

“Too much. You think too much.” Ilya says, tone disapproving of Shane’s feigned annoyance. As if this were news to him over the past eternity that they’ve known each other.

Shane breaks into a smile, watching the red numbers quickly turn into letters before the doors finally open up. “I guess I'll sit on your face next time.” He lets Ilya’s hand go to walk away, rushing down the hallway when a loud *‘what?’* bounces off the walls of the large elevator.

“Wait!” Ilya calls after Shane, picking up his pace as he attempts to flag the man down the short hallway. “I was kidding, baby don’t listen to me. I make Russian joke.” he stumbles over himself, giving Shane enough time to type in the passcode for the door and pull it open.

“Too bad, Rozanov. Your boring fiancé is already thinking about something else.” Shane waves the man off, intentionally waiting until Ilya enters before pressing himself against the closing door. He has no intentions of going any further, and Ilya has enough sense to take the opening, lunging forward until they’re a breath away from each other again.

There isn't enough time to think, let alone feel around for the switch before Ilya's lips cover Shane's.

He's intense and suddenly so impatient when he kisses him, Shane's shoes stumbling off into the dark as he feels his back crash against something cold, paying no mind to the light sting of the impact as he kisses back with a matching sense of urgency. Shane is too focused on Ilya and the way his lips turn his body into something malleable, skilled hands working their coats off and into a messy pile. Shane melts at the heated touches, welcoming the soft tug of his tongue with each kiss and tease Ilya subjects him to.

"Oh, Ilya!" Shane moans, his head falling into the glass paneling of the window. He barely registers their location just long enough to pull away. Lust ridden eyes blinking rapidly as he sobers up and presses his hand against Ilya's bare chest. "Wait, wait. Babe, hold on…" Shane finds the strength to say, breathless as he finally gets space between them.

"What's wrong, you don't want?" There is concern washing over Ilya's face as he cups Shane's cheeks, eyes frantically darting all over him and down his body as if to assess for potential injuries. "You okay?"

"Yes, I'm… m'okay." Shane smiles, watching the confusion deepen, Ilya unable to pinpoint exactly why they needed to stop if Shane insists he's okay. "Let me put these up first." Pushing away from the cool glass, Shane has to remember how his legs work, hoping he doesn't look as ridiculous as he feels heading for the kitchen.

"Are you fucking kidding?" Ilya follows behind him, an obvious pout on his lips as he watches —understands— precisely why or *how* Shane could seem so nonchalant about all of this. "Fuck the flowers, Shane, I get more tomorrow."

"It's not the same, I want these ones. I love *these ones*." He insists, smiling down at the large bouquet that he managed to keep intact for the majority of their date. Ilya always gets him flowers and other pretty things he insists remind him of Shane, and now is no different. Now, Shane has to trim the stems and prune some of the bright flowers before finding his work satisfactory enough to turn away. He's diligent enough to clean up and wipe down the counter before looking up, catching the way Ilya stands with arms crossed against his chest, and a pained expression on his face.

"Unfucking believable." Ilya scoffs, rolling his eyes at the smile Shane gives him. So happy, and so proud.

"Your English is perfect." Shane takes his time finding a home for the large vase. His eyes never leave Ilya's, blinking only when necessary. The last thing he'd want is to lose track of the smile and the fond eyes watching him saunter his way around the kitchen island to finally

meet again.

“Your Russian isn’t.” Ilya bites back a bigger smile, twisting his lips and clearing his throat as a distraction. Only for himself. Shane knows him a little too well now, he never takes Ilya’s words at face value.

Shane beams, his eyes twinkle as he reaches for Ilya’s open shirt. “That’s too bad.” He tugs the collar close enough to hear Ilya’s breath hitch. “***I’ve grown quite fond of the language.***”

“Fuck, Shane.” Ilya shakes his head, pulling on Shane’s hips when he gets close enough to grab. He wastes no time, kissing Shane like his life depends on it. And maybe it does… maybe the rest of his life does depend on exactly that. “Are you done with your family reunion?” Ilya grunts, wanting to be upset, yet he’s quite happy to see Shane’s constant need to cherish everything he does for him. He feels important — *wanted* — by the one man he has ever truly needed.

“I am.” There’s a glint in Shane’s eyes when he speaks, no longer skirting around as he leans forward to reconnect their kiss. He sighs heavily, a wave of relief washing over him right as they make contact.

Time stands still.

Shane feels his world expand into something new, something his 20-step plan hadn’t quite prepared him for. He always knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Ilya, yet something as simple as *this* never felt possible. Despite how badly Shane has wanted that, it always felt so out of reach so soon. As if he shouldn’t dare dream of such a life, so he never bothered.

Watching Ilya drag a warm towel across his stomach, Shane sighs into his pillow, letting the aftermath of his orgasm calm him even further. He lays there for a moment, waiting for Ilya to return into his arms to plant another kiss on him.

If he weren’t so horny– so hyperaware of what often comes after a long tongue and equally long fingers, Shane would feel satisfied by this… by Ilya’s muscles now suffocating him and clinging to his body like he means (is) the world.

“That tongue of yours.” Shane wraps a leg around Ilya’s waist, rolling his hips against his painfully hard erection tucked between their bodies, drooling profusely with far too much interest for either of them to ignore. Ilya has clearly been waiting for a while, the involuntary twitch his hips make fueling Shane even further. “Fuck, your tongue will be the death of me.”

Ilya shudders at that, clearly too sensitive to take anymore of Shane's teasing. Choosing then to shut him up with another kiss, one that makes Shane's grip on Ilya tighten.

"Not today." Shane moans into their kiss, his hand wrapping around Ilya's wrist to stop him from reaching into the nightstand. Tossing the gold wrapper to the side— somewhere unimportant enough to be forgotten for now. "I need to feel you." He smirks, kissing a stunned Ilya back into reality. Shane's voice is low, only audible at their proximity. "***I want you to cum inside me.***"

"You want me dead?" Ilya huffs, the weight of his cock seems to only grow heavier, throbbing against Shane's stomach as he rolls his hips and reaches for more.

He's way too fun to tease.

"Only after you make me cum." Shane chuckles, eyes fluttering when Ilya's lips latch on to his neck. "*Again.*" He sighs, letting his eyes roll back and his body slump further into the sheets— allowing Ilya to do as he pleases with his body.

He's so gentle. Each touch and kiss feels earth-shattering to Shane.

Ilya takes his time kissing down Shane's chest and down his abdomen, each dip and groove getting enough of his affection to make Shane writhe. He's impatient, and far too aroused to stand anymore. Lucky for him, Ilya can sense it too. He stops at Shane's hips, his teeth sinking into the side and sucking a deep mark into the flesh. He's just close enough to Shane's pubis to make him jolt, yet far enough away from his cock to make him whine helplessly.

Shane always wants –*needs*– more when Ilya's hands are all over him, his tongue swiping against the newly formed mark to ease the sting from his marks.

"***So beautiful.***" Ilya sits up to whisper against Shane's lips, the Russian words spilling out so effortlessly as he kisses him again. Firm hands grip his thighs, spreading him open –wider than before– as Ilya settles in between. He takes his time breaking Shane down with each kiss, his pulse slowing down to something steady and less alarming.

There's a brief moment of silence, of false security, Ilya pulling away to watch and stare down into Shane's eyes.

He couldn't be more beautiful, the sea of blue-green threatening to drown Shane on impact as he takes a deep breath. Ilya choosing that moment to position himself properly, the tip of his length barely pressing past Shane's opening before his breath is catching completely. His heart comes to an abrupt stop, eyes rolling back in pure bliss with each inch Ilya slips further

into him.

Shane loves this… he loves how Ilya's tongue and his gifted fingers will never be enough. They will never fill him like *he* does. Like his thick cock settles deep inside him, making a home of the space it occupies between Shane's organs. The slight curve pushing right against Shane's prostate without the slightest bit of discomfort.

When he was younger, Shane used to have a lot of regrets, often self-conscious of how easy it was to unravel him, how Ilya had him wrapped around his finger even before his hips rolled forward and started fucking into him.

Now that he feels older and slightly wiser, Shane is okay with it— he loves how Ilya has mastered his body, how kissing the right spot on his neck makes him shudder pathetically. How Ilya's hands holding him always brings his heart back to life. Shane loves how being with Ilya feels like more than an experience, it feels deserved, and he revels in the way a few long strokes make his back arch with pleasure.

Young Shane often worried over his overly vocal reactions, and how his neighbors perceived him as a result. Now, however, feels quite like the opposite. He can feel how much stiffer Ilya's cock becomes with each moan, how pointed his strokes become in matched enthusiasm. His body reacts to Shane's words and soft breaths in a way that feels addictive, making the young man wonder just how far he can take things.

"Oh Shane." Ilya breathes, somehow unravelling faster than Shane ever thought… faster than Shane often does. This feels new (much like the rest of this evening) and Shane isn't so sure he can last much longer with such knowledge.

Shane *needs* to feel Ilya, to touch him and pull him closer with each long and mind-boggling thrust administered to him.

Prying one hand from where Ilya presses them above his head, Shane claws into the skin of his back. Blunt nails sink into Ilya's chiseled flesh, imprinting on him as he pulls and insists their bodies merge into one. Shane reaches up to reconnect their lips, kissing Ilya again and again, until he feels lightheaded. Too blissed out to wonder if he has lost his voice entirely, or his brain has melted just wet enough to not notice. "Fuck, baby, *oh my god*!" Shane shivers, whining against Ilya's lips when he shifts with ample precision for his thrusts to push deep into his prostate with each back-and-forth.

Shane's eyes roll and his head spins the longer they stay connected.

Ilya makes love to him so fucking good. He wouldn't be able to describe it… to think back to this very night and *try* to reimagine how incredible he feels right now. "I love you." Ilya's voice trembles, crackling between syllables as he quickly approaches the edge. The

breathless way his words melt into Shane's skin makes him ache, making his spine curve and his body burn hot. "My husband." Ilya's teeth tug on Shane's ear, ensuring his words are loud enough to cause damage– to ruin Shane beyond repair. He will never be able to come back from this… from this moment.

"Ilya, *please*!" Shane can hear how pathetic he sounds, his head spins and his ears ring. He's beyond overstimulation– beyond satisfaction. Shane is certain whatever emotion is attacking the bones in his body and turning them into useless sludge is custom. Only by –*for*– Ilya. The man who seems to make a career in learning new ways to turn Shane into something unrecognizable. "I love you." His eyes burn.

Shane hasn't been able to see Ilya clearly for a while now, allowing the memories of his lover to fill in the blanks and remind him of each expression and reaction often paired with the sound of his voice.

Ilya reaches down to palm Shane's thigh, the thickness of it making it hard for the blonde to fully grip him. He pushes forward, laying Shane's bent leg flush against his chest until he's split in half.

It's enough.

That's enough for Shane to fully lose himself. For the last shred of resistance hanging on to let go and give in completely. Ilya's cock feels too deep, *so fucking deep*, and Shane moans wantonly at how good he tastes. How incredible Ilya feels merging into one with him. Shane forgets to touch himself, uncaring of his own orgasm when he focuses too hard on how good Ilya feels and sounds. All because of him. Shane has always been greedy, and Ilya's unintended cosigns never help.

"Holy shit!" Ilya's hips stutter, the sheen of sweat covering his body multiplying with each shaky thrust he pushes forward, rolling down into a complete stop as he shudders and comes deep into Shane. Deeper than he has ever been, and the heat of his orgasm is just what Shane needed; what his untouched cock needed to tumble helplessly over the cliff.

Shane wants to apologize, to kiss the pain away as soon as he realizes. His fingers dig further into Ilya, muscles jolting uncontrollably as he succumbs to yet another orgasm, already certain Ilya is going to bruise judging by the startled hiss that cuts between his moans.

His body shifts, Shane realizing then that he should let go, blinking back to reality once his orgasm washes over him.

"Don't even think about it." Ilya kisses Shane, pecking his lips each time they attempt to form words and speak up. "Is okay, Shane." He slumps down into Shane's arms, his weight pushing them further into the bed… just how Shane likes it.

Unable to say much else while he reboots, Shane nods softly, caressing Ilya's back and running his fingers over where the indents are. Ilya knows his heart, and it's enough to make the guilt less palpable. "I love you." Shane croaks out.

"I love you more." Ilya smiles, releasing the leg in his grasp to reach for Shane's face, tucking damp strands of hair behind his ear to watch him, staring down into Shane's soul until he can't take it anymore.

"Can…" Shane looks away, focusing on Ilya's flushed chest to avoid addressing how rocked his heart has been for the past few minutes. "Can you say it again?" it's uncertain, but loud enough to reach the intended audience, Ilya chuckling softly as he hums in understanding.

"My husband. My handsome, perfect husband." Ilya says, softly kissing the tip of Shane's nose, and the light dusting of freckles on his cheeks.

"In Russian too." Shane keeps his eyes down, not wanting the sting behind his eyes to get worse. Not when one look from Ilya often takes him apart before he can notice. It's almost unfortunate how absolutely and infinitely enthralled he has remained with this man, if not more with each passing day spent together.

Ilya's hand traces its way down the side of Shane's face, touching and feeling every bit of him until he's just holding on to his jaw, pulling him up and back into his line of sight.

Ilya waits patiently, unwilling to say much else until Shane looks at him. As stubborn as he likes to pretend to be, Shane complies rather easily. His eyes shake but move with intention, feeling his breath hitch when he finally locks eyes with Ilya. He has always been breathtaking, yet this moment stands out from the rest.

Shane doesn't feel as alone as he always expects, has never been. Not with the way Ilya's gaze falters right before his eyes.

"I love you." Ilya's nose boops Shane's, a shy smile curling up his lips when he swallows. "***My husband, my lovely husband. My everything.***"

Shane almost regrets reaching out to Svetlana all those years ago. He almost wishes he didn't know what Ilya was saying to him right now, what his long –and secret– sessions amounted to. He wishes it didn't hit harder than everything else Ilya has said to him tonight, that the prospect of such a permanent title didn't shake his world up as hard as it does.

"Fuck!" The wetness hiding behind his eyes wins triumphantly, spilling down his cheeks and the sides of his face as he wraps his arms around Ilya's body. Shane knows his voice would

refuse if he attempted to say anything else in this moment, so he's grateful to Ilya for hugging him back and kissing the top of his fragile head.

He just needs a minute… maybe two.

This is what it's all about.

The love making and the never-ending orgasms are all really great, but Shane loves the moments after the most.

He loves the way Ilya's kisses are never rushed or drenched in lust, how he insists on kissing every last bit of skin he can see until Shane has had enough. He loves how hoarse Ilya's voice becomes, his love confessions sounding more powerful when they vibrate through their connected bodies.

Shane especially loves when they end up in hot water filled to the brim with bubbles —often pink if Ilya has his way— until their muscles feel normal again. It's quiet and intimate, and everything Shane loves about his time spent with Ilya.

"What's your favorite Russian word?" Ilya sits with his legs caging Shane in from behind, softly kissing the freckles behind his ears and down his neck.

"***You***." Shane doesn't hesitate or have to think about it. It's so simple, yet it means just about everything to him. "Without you I wouldn't have a reason to love anything else." His head tilts to say, angling awkwardly as he does his best to face Ilya and gauge his reaction. It's subtle, but the twitch on the corner of his lips is enough for Shane to lean forward and press a kiss on Ilya's cheek. "Boring, right?"

Ilya doesn't say much, choosing instead to play with the bubbles, cupping them to toss over Shane's shoulders in lieu of indulging the light teasing.

Shane is aware he never means it, and it has grown to become something endearing between them. Ilya's response is not only new, but surprising.

"I think I'm getting boring too." Ilya looks away to scoff, his smile comforting Shane enough to make him completely turn around to face him. The water sloshes just enough to not spill over, and Shane is glad that saves them one more mess to clean up later. "I missed my flight

this morning because of your ring." He points down, Shane looking surprised when he realizes their hands were intertwined, briefly admiring the way they still fit together especially after all these years. "Thanks to you, I inherited an amazing mother. She got me a helicopter last minute."

"What time did you make it into New York?" Shane leans forward to rest on Ilya's shoulder, tracing the moles on his chest and connecting them like constellations. Leaving little kisses to the ones he can reach without moving.

"When you saw me." Ilya's groan vibrates through the water, Shane remaining limp when he feels Ilya fiddle with his ring before slipping it off. "It was supposed to be ready last week, but they had problems with machine." He tilts it just well enough to show the inside, words that Shane has yet to learn how to read taking up all the space inside the small band.

Shane wants to blame it on the proposal or the sex or their evening as a whole when he can't seem to pry himself away from Ilya. His chest provides the comfort Shane has always yearned for, and now feels like the perfect time to exploit that. "What does it say?" He moves closer, his lips latching on to Ilya's neck and making a home of it.

"My life started when I met you." Ilya says a stretch of silence later, kissing the diamond encrusted ring before slipping it back into place, returning it to Shane's finger with a fragile smile sitting on his lips. "I had so much to say, but it was never –can never be– enough. This… this feels right. I was born into a world of hate, and everything that made living less painful was taken from me by the time I was 12. It wasn't until a boring Canadian tried to make me quit smoking that I learned how to look forward to things again. I always looked forward to seeing you, and before I knew it, I was looking forward to getting old and sitting around boring fire with my bestfriend."

"Yo—your bestfriend?" Shane sits up to ask, his eyes wide and his cheeks bright red. It's not that he's surprised, he's just… maybe a little. Shane wants to convince himself that he never cared, but he can't help thinking how nice it is to hear. How good it is to know his experiences aren't unique, and Ilya seems to mirror everything he feels, *always*.

Ilya chuckles quietly. He pulls Shane into a lazy kiss, slumping further into the tub as they lay there, unwilling to let the moment pass without being connected for a split second. "Love of my life, actually."

"*Oh.*" Shane can feel his heart beat dangerously fast, hoping his hands stop trembling by the time Ilya notices how difficult breathing becomes for him. "That's nice." It comes out more put together than he feels, and it's enough for now. Ilya's smile now resting against his cheek making it all the better.

Soft hands trace up and down Shane's spine, calloused fingers grazing gently against his skin — just how he likes it. Ilya kisses his temple, pulling him into a tight hug. "So fucking boring, right?" Ilya whispers.

Shane doesn't need to look up or ask to know anymore. He can hear it loud and clear; how happy Ilya sounds… how much happier they are being together.

"***Extremely***."

End Notes

Thank you for reading!

I have yet to receive my books, so we'll see if more is to come after I read the series. Until then, thank you for tuning in 🫶

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