

for the road ahead

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Summary

Then, something weird happens. Something that Ilya can't understand in the beginning, the way Shane's smile drops and the arousal flickers off for a second—not enough time for him to understand it completely, but, well. He has been fucking Shane Hollander for years. Ilya knows his tells, and his boundaries by now, although some of them have been complicated to gather because he likes having them stepped on, sometimes. But this is not like when he says *Ilya, don't suck me off while I'm on the phone*. This is something else. This is something that makes Ilya scared.

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Shane and Ilya have to face how they treated each other in the past.

Notes

I really, really like episode two, but from the first time I saw it, I felt like Hudson have fallen into subdrop (while arguably Ilya might have fallen into dom drop, but he had other issues there). While in the book is not treated like that (the problem is only the no-kissing, explicitly) for me the tone of the show is quite different. In the beginning this was going to be way worse, but after rereading the books I decided to kind of reconcile both of them in my mind with this scene in the cottage, including Ilya's pov of the scene.

Hope you like it!

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

For all Ilya knows, what he is living is just the best dream ever, and he might wake up suddenly, probably alone, in a lonely hotel room, maybe even in Russia. He is not used to good things lasting. Every day when he wakes up, relief is the first thing he feels; Shane's warmth beside him, the sun, even the chirping of the birds—*except* for loons, of course.

That is not chirping. That is the call of a ghost.

Beyond haunted birds, the last days have been really, truly amazing. The sole thought of going back to living without this, which comes to mind in the most unexpected moments, is excruciating for Ilya. An alternate universe in which he didn't decide to do this would lead to not having Shane for him, open, smiling from the moment he wakes up to the moment they decide to go to sleep, even if that smile is not always plastered on his mouth. It makes his heart hurt. Shane's eyes shine in a way that he had only glimpsed before this, in the rare occasions where Shane could not stop it and Ilya allowed himself to see. And even then, every time afterwards he had rejected the notion, cowering from the sparkle, deceiving Shane but mostly himself on the idea that he could live without it—without him.

He knew he was unhappy. He was not aware until which point that was true. When he decided to come to the cottage, and that was something that he had to thank fucking Scott Hunter for, he didn't realize how much of his time was spent in agony; it had been going on for so long that it had moved the poles of what he thought happiness was to a point so low that he really could not imagine how good it really could be.

He expected worse. He still expects fighting, and there will be a lot of things that could still go wrong because they don't really know that much about each other, but mostly because nothing good in Ilya's life has been made to last. Except hockey, maybe, and even that has an expiration date. It could be now, if Shane decides so, but Ilya knows he is not going to do that. In his case, he is cautiously enjoying these days, even sporadic visits from Shane's parents, but he has the gnawing sensation that there will be something worse to come.

In the deep of his heart, he knows that this is just a honeymoon phase and the problems will start coming one after the other. He has seen it in other couples. And in their specific case, because of the long time they have been doing this, god. They have done terrible things to one another, and he thinks that they will end up paying the price. Not that he won't be fighting for it, though. If there is something good in his life that he would do anything to maintain, that is the company of Shane Hollander on his side.

Sometimes he thinks about how ready he was to end it. There is a small hope in him that he would not have followed through in the end. Or maybe he would have, but they might have found the way to get back to each other, one way or another. He just hopes so, because the idea is unbearable now. He cannot imagine himself resisting the pull that Shane is to him. All those years of Shane being always ready to come to him (and with him) had been thrilling in their own way, but Shane really undid him when he didn't allow the lies anymore. *I don't like you; I just want to fuck, I go home with a lot of women; I don't need you.*

Well. Ilya likes him, Ilya doesn't want just to fuck, Ilya wouldn't touch a woman now with a five-meter pole, Ilya really, really needs Shane Hollander. And it's fucking terrifying to feel

like that when the second shoe could drop at any moment.

“I was wrong,” he says, one morning. One week deep into their originally two-week solace, three days since Shane’s parents came to the cottage to share barbeque and beers.

Shane is on his second beer, probably already noticing the alcohol in his blood; laying down on the bench outside, sprawled about, only in his dried-up swimsuit and sunglasses. He is still with his eyes closed behind the sunglasses, but Ilya has something else in mind. From the minute he opens them, Ilya will start counting in his head how long it will take for Shane to get hard, only feeling Ilya’s eyes on him. It’s one of his favorite things about Shane.

Or maybe it was; maybe now that he is discovering things about Shane every minute, it will drop down from the top three favorite things about him. Not lower than the top five, though.

Ilya sits down across the table from him, in one of the stools, a finger of liquid shimmering in his glass. Shane’s smile breaks out, and he finally, *finally* looks at him. Ilya starts counting.

“That might be a first. What about?”

“Hmm,” Ilya says. “I thought your father was the most boring one between you two, but this is really good vodka.”

He takes a sip, looking at Shane from the top of his own sunglasses. Don’t smile, he commands himself, not yet, anyway. It’s getting more complicated by the second.

Shane fakes a frustrated groan. “You’re telling me that I would have just needed a bottle of vodka to avoid all of these years of you calling me *boring*?”

Pursing his lips, Ilya disregards his words. “It would have helped, but come on, Hollander,” he says. “You would need way more than that to cover everything that makes *you* boring.”

Ilya looks down at Shane’s swimsuit; welcome to the party. Shane is so fucking easy, he thinks, and then, possessed by a bout of jealousy, *only for me, though. Not Rose. Rose didn’t make him like this—*

Ilya really needs to get his shit together about fucking Rose Landry. Especially about Shane fucking Rose Landry.

It’s Shane’s voice that brings him back to the terrace. Of course, Shane knows a challenge when he hears one.

“Oh, yeah? What would I need to convince you? Because I feel like I’ve done *a lot*, and not only these days.”

“Hmm, maybe. You need to prove every day, though.”

“That seems really unfair, like a punishment,” Shane says. There is a second of hesitation, but the beer must help because it’s only a second before he is already leaving the bottle on the

table, carefully, his pants showing his interest, and then he supports himself on one elbow, looks at him, and leaves his other hand on his own curved waist, fingers not-so-innocently just touching the start of his ribs.

Ilya's mouth gets automatically dry, and he feels himself starting to get hard, too. Fuck. He is *not* winning this game. His position might allow him to hide it a little bit better, though.

"Is not punishment if you like it, bellboy."

Shane laughs, shrugs. Then he looks around, as if something could have changed in the past hour and it was possible to actually have someone seeing them. Ilya looks at him, trying to project something encouraging with his eyes and his smile, and it must work because after breathing in and out a couple of times, Shane's arm starts to move.

The hand drops to his navel first, just some centimeters down it was, very slowly. It caresses the skin there, getting close enough to the waistband of the swimsuit to make Ilya's breath catch, just to leave it out to go up his chest. Too many years sharing this not to notice Ilya has a terrible fixation with it, so he knows exactly what he is doing when he pinches his nipple with his fingers. Shane's mouth opens, and Ilya realizes, late, that his is open too.

"Fuck," Ilya says, and takes a drink of the vodka. "Do it again; let me see it getting hard." Shane does something else—gets the fingertips to his mouth for a second and comes back to his nipple to do as Ilya asked, and it might be the saliva with the soft breeze, but by the time he leaves it to do the same on the other one, the nub is perked and glistening, and Ilya is a second away from going there and biting them until they are red, until Shane is leaking.

Shane being this forward, though, is something to enjoy, so Ilya reins himself in. Shane takes his sweet time. Mouth open, breathing faster, Shane slides his hand under the waistband of his swimsuit, just enough so he can take himself in his hand. Ilya can't see it all, just a partial look at the tip when the hand is down, but it's enough to make his own dick throb.

"Fuck," he whispers for a second time, unable to stop himself, and not willing to, either. He can say it, loudly, now. He can scream it if he wants it, here, in this small part of the universe to themselves. "Take it out. The whole thing. I want to watch, Hollander."

Then, something weird happens. Something that Ilya can't understand in the beginning is the way Shane's smile drops and the arousal flickers off for a second—not enough time for him to understand it completely, but, well. He has been fucking Shane Hollander for years. Ilya knows his tells and his boundaries by now, although some of them have been complicated to gather because he likes having them stepped on sometimes. But this is not like when he says *Ilya, don't suck me off while I'm on the phone*. This is something else. This is something that makes Ilya scared.

"Shane," he says, and he is paralyzed, wanting to do so many things at the same time—leaving the glass, getting close to Shane, panicking—that he can only manage half an aborted movement for the first action, and he stays there looking at Shane, whose face is still frozen in this weird grimace. "Is too much? Outside? We can—" he starts.

“No, no, Ilya, sorry, it’s okay, it’s just—for a second,” but it’s not okay. He is breathing shallower than he should; he is not looking Ilya in the eye. Then he actually breathes in and, finally, finally looks back at him.

“Come here?”

In the past years, Ilya has not allowed himself to fall into the temptation of asking Shane anything. He has seen Shane reach to him after hesitation, in a heartbeat, scared, worried. The only relief he had during all these years is that as much as Ilya wanted Shane, Shane always wanted him back, maybe even harder. Apart from Rose Landry, he guesses he has been with other people, but, and there is a little bit of pride inside of him when he thinks about it, it’s like he didn’t bother looking for sex when he knew Ilya would be there, even after weeks or months.

Once, almost in the beginning, Ilya teased him, saying he had ruined Shane for other people. Maybe there was more truth to it than he thought.

But in the end, Ilya has never asked—Ilya just offered what he had, and it was Shane’s responsibility to actually get it or not.

Now they can. They are allowed to ask.

Ilya reaches Shane, drops a folded towel to the floor to avoid hurting his own knees, and covers Shane’s cheek with his hand.

“If you need to go inside,”

“No, it’s not that—it’s stupid, sorry.”

Ilya puts a hand over his cheek and moves his face so Shane is looking at him again. He kisses him lightly.

“Nothing you need is stupid. Boring, yes. Stupid, no,” Ilya says, and the smallest of the scoffs from Shane calms a little bit his own heart. Then, because they are better at this than before, “Just tell me what you want.”

Shane closes his eyes, tilts his head. Then, almost hesitantly, Shane says, “Kiss me?”

“Always,” Ilya says, sliding his hand to the nape of his neck. He swallows a trembling sigh from his lips and starts soft, knowing that something is wrong but also that it is not the moment to try and get the answer from Shane. So he kisses him, as requested; more nose and caresses than wanting to devour him, although it’s not for lack of desire. He pushes his tongue out, and the first touch is almost as electrifying as the first time, although the original hesitation only lasted Shane a minute and has never come back.

Shane moans inside his mouth, and Ilya understands it as what it is, so he goes a little bit harder on the kiss. His hands are on Shane’s hair, touching the nape of his neck, his shoulders, scraping lightly with his short nails. Shane keeps kissing them, but he finally opens his eyes, and he seems better. “Tell me what you need. I will give you,” Ilya says

against his lips. Shane says, “Your knees—” and Ilya swallows those words, too. He is not Scott Hunter; he’s young, and his knees can support him for this.

“Tell me. Please,” and the word leaves his mouth without his permission, because he is worried, because there is something in the back of Shane’s mind that he doesn’t know about.

Shane smiles and caresses Ilya’s cheek for a second before getting back into the kiss. He then grabs one of Ilya’s hands and slides them both together through his chest and stomach, under the waistband of the swimsuit. Ilya wraps his hand automatically around it, his thumb going over the slit to spread the wetness that is already there and will help him with the friction. Ilya always needs a little help there, but Shane is another thing altogether.

Shane moans Ilya’s name against his mouth. “Shane, god, you’re already so wet. Fuck. I love it. I want to taste you. I want to taste you all at the same time.”

Shane nods, starting to thrust into his hand. “Later. I’m—I’m close. Stay with me now.”

Between kisses, Ilya repeats, “Always,” and he means it.

It only takes Shane a minute of Ilya stroking him, synchronized with Shane’s thrust, fully focused on that and on kissing him, as much as he can even when Shane starts to not be able to find Ilya’s mouth, his tongue going over the lips and to his cheek, his nose pressing into Ilya’s, the air from his words (fuck, Ilya, Ilya, I’m—oh, god, please) grazing his skin.

Just before he comes, and because Ilya loves pushing Shane over the edge with his voice, Ilya says, “Let me see you finish, let me feel you spilling on my hand, I love it every time, love this, love you,” and that makes it. And is it not magic what those words do to both of them? Because Ilya feels euphoric, too. Shane spills in his hand like asked, as always; such a good boy. Ilya might even have said that out loud; he doesn’t really know because he is only paying attention to how Shane rides the wave of his orgasm, saying *love you, love you too, Ilya, Ilya*.

They are still half-kissing, sharing almost the same air. Ilya just separates his hand long enough to take a napkin and clean his hand the minimum so he can go back fast to touch Shane’s back, who hugs him back.

“Let me—,” Shane says, trying to get to his cock. Normally Ilya would happily allow it but there is something—he still remembers Shane’s expression, and he is not fully sure it has disappeared.

Ilya shrugs. “Can wait,” and he stands up from his knees and sits down on the sofa, Shane supporting himself for a second until he rests his head on Ilya’s lap, looking up to him. Ilya strokes Shane’s hair with one hand, the other on Shane’s chest, and he knows it was a good idea when Shane does not insist on blowing him or making him come. They stay there for long minutes, the sky turning to the first orange lights, Shane hugging Ilya’s arm, smiling at him sometimes, kissing his knee at others, silence spreading until the sunset starts to break.

Staying up late in the dead of night filled with anxiety is a Shane thing—not an Ilya one, and yet here he is. But it's not like Shane five or seven days ago, when he woke Ilya up to tell him about his plan, without realizing, Ilya doesn't think, how big of a thing it was to plan.

Ilya is sure that he was not aware that he was offering a lifetime. Or, better said, Shane knew he was offering, but he had forgotten about being scared of expecting a negative response. In that moment, Ilya could imagine Shane's pragmatic mind going two hundred kilometers per hour, thinking about all the options, and he didn't stop to even consider that it might be a little bit too much to say to Ilya or that he could have anything against it. How their lives have changed in a couple of months. Or even a week.

Ilya does not wake Shane up. Because there is a difference in doing that to someone to tell them about a lifetime plan and shattering everything that he has been thinking about himself and something very different waking up someone to inquire about his—traumas? Problems? Ilya has the suspicion that it is related to him, too. At night, with the loons being freaky outside, it feels stupid to even say anything about it, if he is being honest.

He promised he would try to say whatever he was feeling, honest. So he *will* say something, but first he will observe Shane to see if it's something that is staying. Just making sure. Yeah, that's a plan, not a cowardly solution at all.

Sleep doesn't come to him until it's very late, when at some point Shane, still asleep or at least sounding like it, whispers his name and extends his arm, looking for him.

Ilya whispers, "I'm here," which in that moment is not exactly true, but it is after a couple of minutes with Shane's arms surrounding him, his soft breathing against the nape of his neck, calming him even without knowing he is doing it.

It's not the first time Shane has tried, conscious or not, in their long years—but it is the first time that Ilya allows it.

Ilya is very good at forgetting things when he wants to. And, in the next few days, with the dreadful horizon of their time in paradise getting closer, he starts assuming maybe he imagined it. Maybe it was just Shane's shyness, which comes back sometimes, or the way both still have some resistance to saying some things, just before they remember they are together and they can. They are getting to know each other in the end; what they had before was very different.

Even then, he observes Shane, because he is good at that. He has always been, forced to be aware of his surroundings, even when he was not doing something bad; his home in Russia had been suffocating, always on the lookout just in case his brother would come and fuck him up, or, worse, his father, who was able to communicate with a look a whole world of disappointment that Ilya fears he will never be able to leave, even with his father's death already months in the past.

Shane and he are good. The sex is good, but Ilya doesn't ask Shane again to let Ilya watch him. He is good at forgetting things, but he is pretty sure that was the issue. And he likes it, of course; he loves watching Shane get ready for him, going steadily crazier by the second. But it's not mandatory, and there is plenty to do and to enjoy if it's going to be a problem. There will be time to talk about it; there is no need to do it now.

Morning spent on the pier, looking at Shane when he actually is carefree, swimming around. Ilya has only seen that expression on him on the ice. Ilya falls asleep in the afternoon, and when he wakes up, covered in a light blanket that was not there when he had lain down, he cannot find Shane.

For a second, he is afraid, until he remembers that they are okay. That they are together, and that he is not freaking out on him (again). Also, this is Shane's cottage; it would not be a good idea to run from your own house. So Ilya looks for him until he reaches the open space that he uses for a gym. It's not that big—perfect for one or two people, with a good portion of it dedicated to yoga. Which is what Shane is doing right now, and he must have his earphones on because he does not hear him open the door.

Ilya very carefully watches him, especially without going over any angle that could reflect himself in the mirror. Fuck. That mirror, though. Ilya looks at Shane and at his reflection and goes to him, unable to stop himself. At the moment, Shane is not doing anything too complicated, with his feet on the ground and hands too, forming an amazing triangle. Yoga is terribly boring, but the flexibility is a plus for Ilya, so he will not complain.

Would it be possible to have Shane for him, in that mirror? To make him look at himself and see what Ilya sees. Maybe if Ilya touches him, though, instead of making him do it. Ilya gets closer, steps right behind him, and finally Shane looks at the mirror. He yelps in surprise. "Fuck, Ilya, can you—fuck. Not do that."

Ilya is laughing. "Sorry, sorry, I didn't know you would be so—"

"It's not funny. And of course I am focused; I—that's what yoga is about," he says, but Ilya's laugh is actually contagious, and he is starting to laugh, too. He turns around and lets himself drop onto the mat, the tight pants leaving very little to Ilya's imagination, who doesn't need a lot even on bad days.

Ilya looks at the mirror, looks at Shane, who is now lying face up on the mat, deceptively unbothered. His hand is over his abs and down; well, let's say you don't have to be as perceptive as Ilya to know that Shane is waiting for something. If Ilya said something now (touch yourself, let me see), he would be ninety-five percent likely to do it. Fuck, he should have talked about it. If it *is* bothering him so much, he should have done it. It's late now, though, and not the moment. But before they leave the cottage, maybe, maybe he will find the perfect moment for it. When he gets close to Shane and drops down to his level, his hands on the sides of Shane's head, there is a surprise in Shane's expression, as if he was expecting him to do something different.

Is it possible that they know each other this much? Is Shane able to read his hesitation? It's been a long time since they started this, but they have not been together *that* many times. The only other person that had known him in sex is Sveta, as he is not prone to repeats, but not

even she reads him like this man. Maybe because she was always very keen on communication, which Shane and he are not the best at.

Not the time to think about her, though, not when Shane's eyes are looking at him from below, lips glistening after licking them, without thinking or with a purpose; it doesn't matter anyway. He drops down and kisses him, Shane meeting him in the middle, the kiss heated and wet automatically.

Ilya looks at the mirror one last time. There will be time for that in the future, he hopes.

"I swear to god, I really needed to exercise, Ilya," he says, cock spent and soft against his stomach, minutes later, a dreamy smile on his face.

"We exercise a lot already. Also you will come back to your stupid yoga when you get rid of me," Ilya says, and he goes for the joke, but he knows his own smile fades when he thinks that their time together, which originally seemed so long, is getting closer to the end. Even without going back to Russia, he has to do things in Boston, and earlier than it seems, or else he would need to go back to training with his team. They don't know it will be the last year with them, and they can't suspect as much, either.

Shane realizes. "We will be starting our plan soon. But I think that this year will be the hardest. It was hard enough to be without you without knowing—"

"That I love you?" Ilya finishes; because he loves the way Shane crinkles his eyes when he says it.

"That I wanted to spend my life with you," he says, softly, and the fucker has won this round. "Come here," Shane says, and Ilya just kisses him, without saying anything else, lest it start raining from his eyes and he isn't able to make it stop.

In the end, he doesn't even have to say anything because it's Shane who coaxes the question from him.

The next afternoon, almost evening, they are on the sofa, inside; his glasses are on while he reads.

Ilya basically is checking sports news on his phone, almost mindlessly, definitely not paying attention to it. Ilya ponders if Shane would allow him to come all over those glasses. Maybe if he gets Shane horny enough.

At times, he looks at Shane, thinks about that look on the terrace, about the insecurity, so different from his usual one, and any intention of getting there disappears before it is really formed into a plan. He really should say something. But before Shane realizes, he has chickened out, and he goes back to his phone.

Then, after some minutes of comfortable silence, Shane says, "Is everything okay?"

“What?” he says, centering his look back on Shane’s face. He’s so pretty. And those freckles. Focus, Ilya. “Yes. Good.”

Shane tilts his head. “Are you sure? You’ve been weird.”

“Weird how?”

Shane shrugs. “I think you’re sleeping worse. If you need another bed—”

“Shane, no. It’s—how do you know I did not sleep well?”

Shane smiles sheepishly. “I’m starting to get used to your face when you wake up. It’s been different; it’s taken you longer.” Some seconds pass.

“Not everyone can wake up at eight a.m. sharp and ready to work out, Hollander,” Ilya says, a little bit lighter. Shane waits for him. Usually the silence makes Shane uncomfortable, but at this point he has grown to be an expert on knowing when Ilya *will* be the one to break.

“Okay. I did say I will try,” he nods, leaving the phone on the table. Diligently, Shane closes his book and takes off his glasses to look at him better. “The other day, when we were outside, you were on the sofa, and I said that I wanted to watch. Something happened, yes?”

Shane’s expression is one of someone that knows he should have stayed silent. “Outside? Oh. I. I didn’t think you would, I don’t know. Worry about it.”

“You are not the only one that sees the other. Something happened,” he repeats, more sure this time. At this point he is pretty good at English, but he doesn’t know how to convey what he saw. Too many words for feelings; he doesn’t hear them as much. “Like you didn’t want it. Or it was—too much?”

Shane breathes in. “Ah, fuck, it really doesn’t matter. I don’t even know what exactly came over me.”

“Try to explain. I try to understand. If you don’t want me doing something, just. You just have to tell me.”

He didn’t want to say that much. He wants, of course, for Shane to tell him if he doesn’t want something, but his voice breaks a little. His worries spill into his words, his tone, and he knows it.

“No, no, I promise, Ilya, look at me,” and Ilya obeys. They are still each on their side of the sofa, but Shane’s feet are against Ilya’s in a newly developed nightly routine. Shane looks at him, and something must’ve shown in Ilya’s face; his anxiety must be there for him to see, because Shane smiles softly and says, “Come here and I will tell you. You’re too far away from me.”

He scoots closer to him on the sofa, and Shane makes space for him, tucking his legs and hugging them, his hand touching Ilya’s cheek for a second. The good news is that Shane is not mad at him; the bad news is that Ilya *knows* that whatever is going to be said in this room is going to hurt.

“So,” Shane starts. “You remember Las Vegas, don’t you?”

Ilya nods. Is this about Rookie of the Year? That—doesn’t make any sense. Wait. “Which time?”

Shane’s mouth moves in an involuntary grimace that makes Ilya grimace, too. Well, fuck. “Yeah. When I won Rookie of the Year, you were your normal level of asshole, I think,” Shane says. Ilya says, *hey*, very softly, although he knows he is right. “The other time we were together, though, after the awards. You know. That year—I know we weren’t anything, but it was kind of a rough year.”

Ilya swallows hard. They weren’t anything, but that year was especially hard for Ilya, too, and he knows Shane was one of the only ones that he paid the price without even knowing. “The Sochi Olympics year,” he starts, and then. “Not good.”

Shane nods, mouth tight. “I know now. You know, it took me an embarrassing number of years to realize that half of the times you were insufferable, we were always close to going back home. It took me even longer to get that *home* for you and for me had very different meanings. So I don’t blame you for my reaction. To be fair, now that I know more about your situation, I feel dumb for it.”

“You didn’t know. I made sure. Well, it almost escaped me sometimes. I don’t know why, but I always ended up telling you something, even if you didn’t understand it.”

Shane is kind enough to not say anything about how Ilya knows exactly why, which Ilya appreciates.

“The lack of context didn’t help.”

Ilya feels his eyes prickling. He is not crying, but he might be close to it. But what’s to lose? Shane had already seen him crying, pathetic, and his only reaction was hugging him until he forgot every bad thing in his life.

“We did not communicate well.”

Shane laughs. “That’s a way to put it.” A beat. “Anyway, that night, which, by the way, and before saying anything else: One of the hottest things we have ever done together. Just to be clear.”

Ilya agrees. “We have not done something like that again. Until the other day,” and he starts to get it.

“It was hot,” Shane interrupts. He takes Ilya’s hand, and Ilya braces himself for impact. “So I could not understand why after I felt more like shit than I have ever felt, especially with you. I knew I must have fucked up at some point, because you were never so—detached the minute we finished fucking. Not before that time, and not after.”

Ilya knows the confusion is in his face. Why did he have to use fucking English words that Ilya didn’t know right now? “Detached?”

“Sorry,” Shane says. “It’s also difficult for me to explain. Detached means cold. Separated from me. Far away even in the same bed. I was drinking that fucking vodka that I didn’t like; I was trying to get closer to you, and all I managed was to get you farther away. And,” and Ilya knows he is pushing through his own resistance to embarrassment, as if he had to remind himself that now they can talk about this stuff. “Fuck, I needed so much to be touched at that moment. In the beginning, I was just mad at myself because I was sad that we had not kissed, which I knew I shouldn’t because, who cares, right? We were just fucking.”

“There is more.”

Shane nods. “Yeah, I was not feeling well afterwards. For *days*. Unfocused. Fighting with my parents. No energy at all. At least,” he laughs, but there is not a lot of humor, “there were no more matches after. And honestly, I had almost forgotten about it, but then the other day, I don’t know. It came to my mind. And for a moment, just a moment, I felt the same? That’s why I,” he trails off, but Ilya knows. That’s why he needed Ilya to be touching him.

The good news is that he asked, and Ilya gave it to him. At *least*.

Ilya stays silent for a second because, as weird as it is, it rings a bell. “Svetlana told me something like that,” he starts, and he is kind of into the way Shane automatically frowns. Ilya kisses him where he reaches, which ends up being Shane’s right knee. “Don’t be jealous. This was before and not with me. Svetlana is good friend, and I am not the only one she was with. I was in Boston, and she came to my house. No fucking or anything—just company.” A beat, and he has to swallow on his dried throat before keeping talking. “I didn’t know I did that to you.”

Shane takes him softly by the nape of his neck, spreads his legs open, and pushes Ilya into a hug, Ilya’s face against his chest. He kisses him on the forehead. Ilya loves that. “How could you know? I don’t think we can put the blame of that only on top of you, Ilya.”

He takes a second, but why hide it at this point? “You talked about Russia, which didn’t help, but I was already bad before. I didn’t want to get so close to you. I tried not to fuck you, but you made it so difficult,” he says, and Shane’s soft laugh rumbles on his chest. Then Ilya looks up to his eyes. “I thought—I thought if I kissed you, I would never stop. I’m sorry.”

Shane smiles, kisses him on the lips, the tip of the nose. “I *could* have said something. I *could* have said no that night.”

Ilya frowns, only partially mocking. “Could you?”

Shane laughs. “Like, theoretically, I could have. In reality, I never did, because I didn’t want to. Because having you a little, even halfway there, even *detached*, was better than anyone ever in my life.” He laughs. “Now who’s mad?”

Ilya grumbles. “Don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Shane laughs, but Ilya is already turning around to meet his kiss, and he catches on to the laugh, the smile, and the bad memories, hoping to fade them away.

Ilya then says. “Do you know what I remember the most from that day? What I jerked off to that whole summer?”

Shane looks at him, eyelids going heavy. “Tell me.”

Ilya swallows. “It was truly a fucked-up year. And I missed you the moment you left the room. But every time, when I try to remember that day, I can only think about you crawling over the bed for my cock.” He swallows. “Your hunger.”

He tries to imprint as much feeling as he can in the last words, punctuated by the way he is already starting to get hard. And it is not a lie, either; in an unforgettable night, the way Shane came to him and mouthed his dick over the briefs still haunts him to this day.

Shane’s breathing picks up, and Ilya shifts until his stomach is directly on top of Shane’s crotch, just to confirm what he already knows.

“I was so desperate for you that night. I was hard on and off the whole ceremony *and* the party.”

“I know. I knew then. *You* would’ve sucked my dick in that filthy bathroom if I had insisted.”

Shane thrusts against him and moans. “I think I would have sucked you off in the middle of the room with everyone around.”

“You would have not.”

“No. But I thought about it anyway.”

“Just one thing,” Shane says, before it gets impossible to stop. Ilya looks at him. “You’ve also been weird. This morning, in the gym. I thought you had something else in mind. Like you were thinking about making me do something and then decided not to.”

Ilya grimaces. “I thought the problem was me giving you orders. I don’t know. It was—”

“Well, it is not. And now we have talked about it so you know.”

Ilya smiles, partially relieved and partially being a bitch. It matches the mood. “So you *like* me giving orders?”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself.”

Shane is pushing Ilya onto his back, and Ilya knows what’s coming. “Suck me off now, you exhibitionist.” And Shane is already opening his mouth, breathing down his cock, when Ilya says, “Wait,” and picks the glasses from the table, offers them to Shane.

Shane lets out a frustrated groan, but Ilya pouts, and it works, of course.

Ilya puts a cushion behind his head to have the perfect view.

“I promise I will kiss you afterwards,” he whispers, touching Shane’s cheek, and he is joking way less than he means to.

Shane smiles fondly. “I hope you like how you taste, though,” and Ilya groans, getting harder, if possible, because coming in Shane’s mouth is not an everyday occurrence. Then Shane opens his mouth, takes him in, and Ilya stops thinking at all.

End Notes

Version A of a dialogue was like this and I felt VERY tempted to let it there :D

Shane laughs. "Like, theoretically, I could have. In reality, I never did, because I didn't want to. Because having you a little, even halfway there, even detached, it was better than every other experience I had." He laughs. "Now who's mad? I swear you are the most jealous man I know."

Ilya gasps, a hand to his heart. "You know other men?!"

I'm [youbitehard](#). please come talk to me about hollanov.

Super late but here's the tumblr post

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!