

coach, I'm threading needles

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coach, I'm threading needles

by Anonymous

Summary

Ilya fucks a girl in a Hollander jersey. Word gets back to Shane.

Notes

title taken from beam me up by alex g. he was doing football metaphors i'm appropriating it as a hockey metaphor... #MakeEverythingAboutShaneAndIlya

as with my other works this is a stand alone but i made it part of a series because i'm posting in this fandom anonymously and want to have my fics in one place. no need to read the others to understand this lol. it's very much what it says on the tin

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

The Raiders were playing in Montreal on Wednesday and flying in on Tuesday, which meant Ilya would be in Shane's city for two consecutive nights. This was a very bad thing.

The urgency and desperation that usually characterized their meetings was fundamental to how they worked. It insulated them from intimacy. After weeks or months without, Shane was needy enough to forego reassurance, Ilya was too impatient to drag it out, and they generally went for what they already knew worked. When they got together for a second night in a row none of those factors held true. Shane would have inevitably developed some hang up in the intervening period that Ilya had to coax him out of, all attentive and seductive. Ilya always wanted to incorporate some form of edging into whatever game they played, and one or both of them would come with new weird ideas of what they could do to each other. It always felt like more, felt dangerous. Shane's hangover from a second night with Ilya would last at least a week.

So this time he had a plan. He shamefacedly accepted that he struggled to say no to Ilya, but it wasn't literally impossible. The circumstances just needed to be right, so he created them – he faked homesickness to his parents two weeks in advance. He talked about a restaurant they used to go to when he was a kid in Ottawa. He suggested doing it again the Tuesday Ilya arrived in Montreal. Shane would stay with them and return home in the morning. It was possibly the most emotionally manipulative thing he'd ever done, but he honestly felt like he had no other option. His mom protested that it was too long a drive for the night before and morning of a game but Shane pretended it was the only free evening in his schedule for the next couple months, which made his dad worry Shane wasn't taking enough time for himself. Ilya really brought him to the lowest of lows.

Ilya's first text came through when Shane was halfway to Ottawa and he still considered turning around, which was all the reassurance he needed that leaving had been a good idea. At the next red light he read *I can be there from nine* and the presumption made him hot all over. Still he replied, *cant sorry. other plans. see you tomorrow*. The periods made it read a little cold but he knew having text broken up helped Ilya parse it. He was proud of himself for getting it sent before the cars behind him got impatient; it helped he'd decided exactly what to say two days ago. He expected Ilya to follow up, to cajole, to do something Ilya denied was begging but which came pretty close. But Ilya never responded at all, and Shane pretended he wasn't disappointed.

The dinner was nice and being home was nice. He had missed his parents, really. Shane had to get up pretty early to make it to the morning walk through, but it wasn't like he'd have gotten much sleep if he'd been with Ilya, either.

The game was a slog. In a long season there were inevitably nights like this where nothing clicked, where Shane wasn't possessed by the hockey spirits. It wasn't the same as playing bad, as forgetting how to make a shot. It was more that he couldn't work up a passion. Not

unheard of, although he was pretty sure it was the first time it had happened against Boston. Against Ilya.

It usually wasn't only Shane, it was a malaise that beset a whole team. He thought everyone was feeling the mediocre sameness of it, that this was a game to get over with, and then Hayden Pike picked a fight with Ilya Rozanov.

Which definitely wasn't more of the same.

Hayden wasn't weak and he could throw a punch, but if he wanted to make a habit of it he probably shouldn't start with Ilya. For one thing, Ilya had at least thirty pounds on him. For another, Hayden was a nice boy. Shane assumed the shock he was feeling when he processed the scene was shared with every single person in attendance, on the ice and off. He assumed most of them shared his certainty that even though it was Hayden who'd grabbed the back of 81's jersey and got him to turn around, it was still somehow Rozanov's fault.

He must have said something heinous. Hayden was good natured, good tempered, had never done more than roll his eyes at Rozanov before. It would have to have been something about Jackie or the kids. Shane didn't think Ilya would trash talk toddlers, so probably Jackie, which was disgusting and pissed Shane off too. The weakest worst part of him lamented this meaning he really shouldn't hook up with Ilya tonight. The even weaker, worse part conceded he probably still would, and would just have to feel extra awful about it in the aftermath.

Hayden got a swing in and it pretty respectably hit Ilya's jaw. Shane didn't want to say Ilya let it happen but he didn't seem to try to avoid it. He looked as confused as Shane felt, but he might have been playing that up to goad Hayden. He also looked like he found it funny. Not that funny, of course, and when Hayden made another move toward him Ilya did what everyone had been holding their breaths for – either in dread or excitement – and laid Hayden out flat on the ice. On the jumbotron, Shane saw a larger than life Ilya smile wide at his teammates and mouth, What the fuck was that?

Yeah. What the fuck was that. Shane tried to pose the question a couple times to Hayden, who shook his head tersely, so Shane guessed it would have to wait for the locker room.

Montreal lost. It was a close fought game and Shane took some comfort from the fact that the play that finally won it for Boston was not attributable to either Ilya's talent or Shane fucking up. He didn't calculate his individual level of responsibility for losses except when it was a match up against Ilya, when everything was personal and being a team player stopped counting for as much. He thought that maybe they would've won if he hadn't spent last night in Ottawa, undoing his whole routine. He wondered if his mom, who had undoubtedly watched the game, thought that too.

He considered texting her as he sat in the locker room, trying to offer some explanation, but everything he could say she already knew. That was what was so hard about disappointing her; she understood the game too well for any of her expectations of him to be unrealistic. He wondered how disappointed she'd be if she knew he'd failed to meet them because of a boy.

He tapped his phone against his thigh and replayed the fight in his head, which wasn't any more comforting to think about. Hayden had gone to get checked by a medic after the game and Shane had stayed behind to do his own check too. The locker room had already emptied, which Shane thought was probably a good thing. He suspected it would be better for the conversation to be private, for his sake if not for Hayden's.

God, he hated when Ilya made himself relevant to Shane's life. Hated having to talk about him to other people.

Hayden made a face when he returned to the locker room and saw Shane, like he expected a dressing down.

"I'm not mad," Shane said hurriedly.

"Just disappointed?" Hayden smiled at his own joke, then winced.

"I'm sure you had a good reason," Shane said. "I'm curious what it was. If it was worth it."

He'd only taken one hit, and Ilya had done it more out of principle than bloodthirstiness. Hayden didn't look so bad, his lip swollen and cheek purple and a band aid above his eyebrow. At least he was standing and talking.

"You tell me, man," Hayden said.

Shane didn't know what that meant. Hayden sighed. "I don't know. I just felt like I had to do something."

"Why? What did he do?"

Hayden grimaced, looking uncertain.

"Just say it, Hayd," Shane said, getting a little antsy.

"Yeah," Hayden said, and then sat across from Shane. "I'm kind of like not used to talking about sex with you."

"Sex?" It came out sounding like Shane didn't know what the word meant. What he was really asking was how sex had anything to do with Hayden hitting Ilya. "Did he say something about Jackie?"

"No, no," Hayden said, frowning then wide eyed. "God, I forgot about Jackie, she's gonna kill me for this."

Shane didn't really care right then. "What did Rozanov say?"

Hayden shook his head. "Nothing, actually. It was a couple of his teammates, they were—laughing, and I thought it was maybe at you, it seemed like, and I asked them what was funny."

"Okay," Shane said.

“Right. Well, apparently the team flew into Montreal yesterday, and went out last night. To a bar. And obviously, I guess, Rozanov left with a girl.”

“Obviously,” Shane said, his eyes fixed on Hayden’s face.

“Right,” Hayden said again. “Only the thing is she was wearing a Hollander jersey.”

It took Shane a while to process. “Okay,” he said.

“And they think that’s real funny, I guess.”

“Oh,” Shane said. “And Rozanov didn’t say anything about it?”

“No, just his teammates.”

Shane nodded. He wasn’t sure when he’d last blinked. “So you—that’s why you started with him?”

“Yeah, man,” Hayden said, tone vaguely apologetic. “I know there’s this whole rivalry you play into, but, I mean, shit talking is one thing. Part of the game. Doing what he did is – weird.”

This was that heterosexual male pride he was supposed to have, Shane realized. He was probably expected to have an opinion on this. “Yeah, it’s weird, but Rozanov is weird, so.”

“Damn, you’re really gonna rise above it, huh,” Hayden said, marveling. Hayden interpreted everything Shane said and did in the most favorable light possible. Shane sometimes feared this was a big part of why their friendship worked. “Here I was trying to protect your honor.”

“I do appreciate that,” Shane said. He did, it just also embarrassed him. If he intended to protect it from Rozanov, Hayden was some years too late.

Hayden waved his hand like it was no big deal, the effect undercut by the bruised knuckles. “Nah, of course. I don’t know, man, I’m relieved you’re not upset, but it is fucked up, right? I mean, it’s sort of creepy.”

Maybe it would be creepy to a player who wasn’t sexually fixated on Ilya. It was something else to Shane.

“It mightn’t have meant much,” he said. He could hear how flat his tone was, like he was bored or exhausted. “Maybe she was...” Really hot, was how that sentence was supposed to end. He just wanted the conversation to be over.

“You think it might have been a coincidence?” Hayden asked. “God, you really are a saint.”

Shane tried a smile. “There are a lot of Hollander jerseys out there,” he said. “Odds aren’t that low.”

“Yeah, okay, big shot,” Hayden said, rolling his eyes.

Shane felt a faint sense of relief. He'd done it, he'd gotten out of the conversation. They talked a little about their plans for the evening, every word out of Shane's mouth a lie, and then parted ways. As soon as he was on his own Shane pulled out his phone and read the texts from Lily he'd known would be there. ??? and then: *I cannot come to this city and not get to fuck you.*

Drama queen, Shane might have texted back on a better night. Instead he sent: *I'm there in twenty. come whenever.*

Shane had only been in the loft for two minutes when he got the text from Ilya saying he was outside. *Key under flower pot with red flowers*, Shane texted back. It was a move he'd had in mind for a long time but had never been sufficiently motivated to act upon until tonight. It had always felt a little demeaning, a little housewife, going downstairs to let Ilya in, ushering him back up. If this new arrangement riled Ilya at all he didn't give anything away. Maybe thirty seconds later there was a knock on the door. He must have run up the stairs, two at a time, the way he always did when Shane was with him.

Shane opened the door knowing full well what he would see, and it still felt like taking a punch. He clenched the handle like he might otherwise collapse. Being close to Ilya was always disorienting, and especially so when he wanted to be mad. "Hi," he said.

Ilya lifted his chin up and it took Shane a second to get past his stretched throat, his larynx, and realize he was showing off the bruise Hayden had left on his jaw.

"Ha," Shane said.

"Your boy is full of spirit," Ilya said. "Like little dog."

Shane felt duty bound to defend Hayden even though the fight was honestly far from his mind. "Yeah," he said. "Unfortunately he spends more time working on hockey than fist fights, so."

"This joke does not work," Ilya said. "I am better than him at both."

Shane turned around and made his way to the kitchen, which for some reason seemed like the best place to talk. Maybe because they hadn't fucked there before. Ilya followed a few steps behind. Usually he would have moved in on Shane already; he must have sensed that something was different. Shane forgot sometimes how good Ilya was at reading him.

Shane came to a stop, stared at the sink, contemplated pouring himself a glass of water just to delay this further, then rolled his eyes and turned around. "How was last night?" he asked, and instantly regretted it. Like he was trying to trick Ilya, catch him in a lie. This wasn't the kind of thing Ilya would bother to lie about.

Ilya made a sad noise. "I missed you," he said. "I was thinking of you."

Shane imagined how that would have made him feel if he didn't know the truth behind it, the way he would have kissed Ilya, how much Ilya would have liked it. He said, "So I heard."

Ilya cocked his head.

"You picked up someone wearing my jersey," Shane said.

Ilya smiled. "Yes," he said. "I did not know you had any pretty fans."

"Jesus, fuck you," Shane said, finally finding his anger. He'd more been in a daze before. "God, what the fuck is wrong with you?"

"You are mad?" Ilya asked, looking surprised, and it had to be fake, it had to be. "You don't think this is hot?"

"Of fucking course not," Shane said.

"I would think it's hot if you fucked girl in my jersey," Ilya said, and Shane's stomach twisted. Ilya made a considering face. "I will think of it next time I jerk off, probably."

Beneath his discomfort, Shane was caught off guard by the wording. All he'd known was that Ilya had gone home with a woman in his jersey. What Ilya just said implied the jersey had stayed on.

"Did she wear it during?" Shane asked. It was supposed to come out outraged.

Ilya looked pleased by the question, encouraged, the way he got when Shane begged or praised him, when Shane had totally given in, and Shane understood why. It sounded more like dirty talk than an accusation. "Yes," Ilya said, and nothing more. He did that sometimes too, when he could tell he had Shane where he wanted him – forced Shane to carry the momentum.

"How did you—did you ask her to?" He hated himself for asking but couldn't resist. There was anger, yes, but beneath that a far more troubling fascination.

"No," Ilya said. "She tried to take it off, I stopped her, she was okay with it. No talking about it."

"Is that," Shane said, and looked up to the ceiling. "Do you want to fuck me in my jersey? Is that, like, a fantasy?"

Ilya hummed, like he was giving it real thought. "Not really a fantasy. I fantasize about you in your fancy suits. I like to defile them. Defiling your jersey, good but not as good."

Shane stared at him. What the fuck did Ilya think defile meant. "Did you come on it?"

Ilya's smile was slow. "You would like this?"

"No," Shane said.

“I would like this,” he said. “But no. She wanted me to come inside her, so.”

Shane felt sick, and something else. “Jesus Christ, fuck you,” he said.

“Well,” Ilya said. “You cannot blame her, can you?”

And it was not a general you. It was a Shane Hollander you. Shane Hollander could not blame her. Ilya talked a decent amount about Shane’s blush, how much he liked it. He would drag his finger over Shane’s cheeks during sex, or outside of sex when he was trying to make Shane hard for no reason. Shane wondered if Ilya had ever seen him as red as he was right then. He felt like he had a fever.

“You shouldn’t tell me these things,” Shane said, desperately grasping for dignity. “I don’t want to know, it’s supposed to be separate—me and these other people should be separate. Don’t tell me about them, and don’t make fucking them about me.”

Ilya looked cautious, thoughtful. “You would prefer when I fuck other people that I do not think of you?”

I would prefer you not to fuck other people. The words came to his mind unbidden. He hadn’t articulated that feeling before. He didn’t say anything, didn’t know what to say.

“Okay,” Ilya said, apparently hearing something in Shane’s silence. “Well, so you know, if you fuck other people, I would like you to think of me.”

Shane swallowed, couldn’t help himself. It was the only thing on his mind, and would be until the next awful, impossible thing Ilya said came and swallowed it whole. “Do you mean that you were thinking of me?”

“Well, yes,” Ilya said, his lip twitching. “Your name was right there. Hard to ignore.”

“So it was like a joke,” Shane said, after a pause, trying not to sound like he was seeking reassurance. “You thought it was funny.”

The humor melted off Ilya’s face, his eyebrows creasing upwards. “No,” Ilya said. “I did this because I had been thinking of you and this was how to keep thinking of you.”

It was overwhelmingly blunt, the way Ilya could be. Shane wouldn’t let it work on him. He went for sarcastic when he said, “I guess I should feel special.”

But the absolutely humiliating problem was he did feel special, or at least sometimes, awfully, wondered if he should. Ilya definitely went through more trouble to fuck Shane than he did most other hook ups, and going back to the same person over and over wasn’t his usual approach, information Shane had deduced and latched onto from some fucked out pillow talk six months prior. It was an impossibly low bar, but among Ilya’s sexual partners maybe Shane was special. And Shane didn’t want to try to put a number on how many people had slept with Ilya, but there had to be hundreds if not thousands more who had wanted to, who had imagined it but would never get to have it, would never know what it was like, and by this impossibly low bar Shane was special too.

“Yes,” Ilya said. “Shane Hollander is special. Everyone knows this.”

Shane looked down and Ilya took a step toward him, his movement smooth like a snake, his shoulders dropped, relaxed. Shane knew Ilya thought this part of the evening was over, the part where Ilya said shocking things and Shane told him to fuck off. Similar scenes had served as preludes to sex countless times before.

But at a certain point Shane had to find some goddamn self respect. “You should go,” he said. Ilya stopped his advance, looked frozen in place.

“I know you fuck a lot of people, and I don’t care,” Shane said, and prayed the shake in his voice just sounded like anger. “But there has to be boundaries. You can’t pull shit like this and expect me to just take it.”

“Baby,” Ilya said, soft. Shane closed his eyes, immediately recognizing the tone, saccharin and apologetic. Ilya had gotten like this once before, when he’d shown up to Shane’s room an hour late and wasted at the last all star weekend. Once he’d realized Shane was actually pissed at him he’d stopped joking and started... this. It hadn’t worked, in that Shane hadn’t fucked him, but he had let Ilya sleep it off on his couch. Had brought him a glass of water. Had brought him a blanket. Had turned the TV off and lowered the lights and used his earphones. Had rolled the sound of Ilya’s voice trying to sweet talk him over and over in his head.

“Don’t,” Shane said now.

“You said you had other plans,” Ilya said, still soft and low and like something Shane could feel on his skin. “I went a little crazy, thinking about this. I needed to do something. I was out of my mind, I’m sorry.”

“I had dinner with my fucking parents,” Shane spat.

Ilya had the audacity to smile, apparently not able to stay contrite for very long. “How are they?” he asked.

“Fuck you.”

“I had been waiting for weeks, maybe months,” Ilya said. “Getting you twice is always so special. You have noticed too, yes? When we have two nights it is different. Something is different.”

“Rozanov,” Shane said, his voice weak, which was fitting, because he gave in as soon as Ilya’s hands were on his jaw, before Ilya even kissed him. He kissed him and kissed him and kissed him, walking him backwards out of the kitchen, across the living room, into the bedroom, a path Ilya knew way too well. Ilya kissed him as he pushed him down onto the bed, as he climbed over him. Sometimes their kissing could feel like sex, the way Ilya pushed his tongue in, how wet it got. Sometimes Shane’s mouth was the sorest part of him after a night with Ilya. Sometimes Shane wondered if he could come from it, but that was a crazy thought that never needed to be spoken aloud.

They got their hands on skin but only under clothes, not taking any off, and Shane felt restless, constantly readjusting, trying to find new positions, one where he was touching all of Ilya at once, maybe. He'd gotten like this before but Ilya always settled him, told him to calm down, held him in place. This time Ilya let him away with it, going where Shane pushed him like he wanted Shane to wear himself out. When Shane climbed on Ilya's lap, on all fours over him, Ilya broke the kiss.

"I think you should suck me off," he said.

"Of fucking course you do," Shane said, like his mouth didn't get wetter at the words.

"It will make you feel good about yourself," Ilya said. "You know how good you are at it. So talented. You learned to swallow so quick, didn't you?" His finger traced a firm line along Shane's jaw to his earlobe, where Ilya tugged hard enough to make Shane's head bob, like a nod. Yes, he had learned to swallow so quick. It was humiliation after humiliation and Shane didn't understand why he liked it. He knew this couldn't be standard fare dirty talk, that Ilya wouldn't use it on just anyone, that it was tailored to Shane's stupid need to be top of the class.

"I'm not gonna swallow tonight," he said.

"No?" Ilya ran his thumb over Shane's lips. "Where will I come, then?" *You cannot blame her, can you?*

"I want you to fuck me and I'm not waiting for you to get it back up," Shane said.

Ilya smiled. "I like that when you're angry you can talk about sex," he said. It didn't even sound mocking. It sounded like a genuine compliment.

"Fuck you," Shane said.

Ilya pulled himself out from under Shane, off the bed, and stood beside it. He jerked his head at the floor in front of him. Shane closed his eyes, inhaled, exhaled, then got off the bed and on his knees. Ilya's fingers traced along his earlobes and Shane wondered if the head nod pull thing had been accidental, if Ilya had just developed a fixation on his ears since they last met up. They were both still fully dressed, which explained some of the sweat. Shane pushed his face into Ilya's jeans, the material rough against his cheek the way Ilya's leg hair could be. Shane dragged his face across it. He was burning up, he should be seeking something cool, it didn't make sense to find relief in the press against Ilya's warm thigh.

Ilya held him away, just a couple inches, as he undid his fly and pushed his jeans and briefs down, neither of them bothering getting them below his knees. Shane widened his eyes because he knew Ilya liked that, liked the idea of his size being intimidating, even now when he wasn't quite fully hard. Shane liked it too, playing up Ilya's overwhelming larger than life, as though it was physically manifest. But he also liked how it made Ilya seem simpler, like all he really needed was for Shane to call his dick big.

"You know you can do it, you know you can take it," Ilya said, and Shane wrapped his mouth around the head.

Ilya obviously had faith in his ability, because he didn't give Shane long to prepare before he fucked forward. But Shane put his hands on Ilya's hips, forcing them to still, something he hadn't done since the early days of giving head. This was less about Ilya's pleasure than it was about Shane's skill. He needed to get a good grade, he wouldn't just kneel there and take it. He began moving himself up and down, twisting his wetted hand around what he couldn't cover. The noises were disgusting, embarrassing. He worked up to the same speed and force as if Ilya had been fucking his face. He was fucking himself on Ilya's dick. The thought made him moan.

Ilya said fuck and made it three syllables and Shane looked up and moaned harder. Ilya could keep himself under control when he was fucking Shane, at least until the end, but sometimes when Shane blew him he looked like he'd never been touched before. Ilya was right, it did make Shane feel good about himself.

"Yes, keep looking at me, eyes up," Ilya said, his voice wrecked, accent thickening. "Fuck, fuck—" His hands closed on Shane's jaw and he pulled Shane off. He was breathing jaggedly, like it hurt him to break contact.

Shane stayed on his knees, mouth still open, hoping he looked as betrayed as he felt.

"You don't want my come this way, remember?" Ilya said, stepping back and sitting down heavily on the edge of the bed.

Shane climbed up onto Ilya's lap and Ilya held him tight, like a friendly hug, and it felt dirty how non-sexual it was. He was calming himself down, Shane belatedly realized, making sure he wouldn't come as soon as he got in Shane. Shane probably wasn't helping, fucking himself up against Ilya's stomach in small thrusts like Ilya mightn't notice. He wasn't sure when he'd gotten hard. It might have been when he'd answered the door.

"Okay," Ilya said quietly, after about a minute. "Okay."

They stripped each other in a flurry, no pause to kiss or touch, needing nakedness. Shane moved to get on his hands and knees but Ilya stilled him by grabbing his hip. "I think tonight you should look at me when we fuck. Okay?"

Shane nodded and got on his back instead. They didn't usually do it like this after a game because it was a little harder on Shane's body, but he wanted it too. He wanted to look at Ilya. He put his feet down flat on the bed, his knees up, and waited. Ilya sat back on his own knees in front of Shane, his eyes scanning over him. "Everyone knows Shane Hollander is special," he said, almost to himself, and Shane shut his eyes.

Ilya put his hand on Shane's knee and kept it there as he crawled across the bed to reach for condoms and lube, like he couldn't break away entirely. Shane still had his eyes closed when Ilya returned, pushed Shane's legs wider and settled between them. "The plan is you look at me," Ilya said. Shane opened his eyes.

Ilya always used way too much lube, made a mess, which seemed careless but Shane had no doubt in his mind was completely deliberate. If Shane didn't have to wash every single thing on the bed after Ilya came over, Ilya would see it as a failure. But Shane never complained,

not seriously, because he liked mess too. He liked getting wet, liked Ilya calling him wet, and he liked how much louder it made the sex. He couldn't say these things, couldn't ask for them, so he just thanked God it was what Ilya wanted too. There were a lot of things that worked that way.

He did also suspect that Ilya's copious use of lube was in part because he liked Shane having to replace it pretty frequently. Ilya had told him he should stock up but Shane felt embarrassed at the idea of owning more than two bottles at any given time. Ilya always got turned on when they got to the end of one. Shane could tell even though Ilya never said it.

When he'd made a mess of them both and the bed sheets, Ilya rolled on the condom and sort of threw himself on top of Shane, like a belly flop into a pool, so incongruous and unexpected that Shane laughed. Ilya pulled himself up on his elbows over Shane with a pleased smile Shane looked away from. He pushed Shane's hair off his forehead and kept that hand spread across the crown of Shane's head, big and warm and heavy. It was sticky with lube, so Shane's hair would be gross along with everything else, but it wasn't like his showers after Ilya were ever anything less than thorough. With his other hand Ilya reached between them and positioned his dick at Shane's hole, his gaze going from Shane's eyes to the place where they were meeting every couple seconds like he was watching a tennis match. Ilya loved this part of sex so much, more than Shane did, loved seeing himself get inside. At the first press, barely breaching, Shane's eyes clenched closed, and Ilya stilled. "Keep going," Shane said, sounding like he'd already been fucked. "Keep going, I don't care, I can take it."

"I know," Ilya said. "But open your eyes."

Shane huffed but did so and Ilya slammed home, Shane arching off the bed, almost like he was trying to get away, but he couldn't, because Ilya was holding him in place. Ilya took his hand from between them, skating it over Shane's dick and stomach and ribs and then gripping his side, just beneath his armpit, his thumb circling Shane's nipple, over and over. His other hand remained firm in Shane's hair. Shane's hands slid over Ilya's shoulders and landed on the back of his neck, like they were slow dancing, and Ilya's thrusts did start slow, like he picked up on that too.

Getting fucked from behind was better sex, harder and deeper, but Shane still thought he preferred it like this, having Ilya all over him, surrounding him, staring down at him, his hands on Shane's chest and in his hair, his crucifix dragging lightly along Shane's throat. During sex it felt like an extension of Ilya, another way he touched Shane. Sometimes Shane thought about taking it into his mouth, but it was too high risk. He hoped it might happen accidentally.

When Shane closed his eyes – and he hadn't realized before how often he did it, how much he relied on that reprieve – Ilya would stop moving. They'd never played a game like that before. Ilya's face was quivering. Not always, but sometimes, Ilya looked younger when he was inside Shane. Shane wanted to ask something like, was it this good with her? But he didn't have the guts. And maybe it was naive, but he just didn't believe it could be, didn't believe a stranger could make Ilya feel as good as Shane knew how to. Nobody paid attention like Shane did, nobody tried like he did. And even by their standards this felt special – the

two of them so absorbed in each other, so connected, every sensation shared. Shane slid his hands down to Ilya's abs, because he loved feeling them work when Ilya was fucking into him, and Ilya loved him feeling it too.

He wondered if that was why Ilya was being so intense, so much. To draw a clear divide between what he did last night and this. Probably that was a terrible idea. Probably Ilya should fuck Shane exactly how he fucked strangers in bars.

They came at the same time. It had happened a couple times before, more or less, but had always felt like a coincidence. This time it felt like it couldn't happen any other way, like they were each bringing the other down with them.

This was another reason Shane loved fucking this way: afterwards Ilya would collapse on top of him, not holding off any of his weight, his flesh and muscle and bone pressing Shane into the mattress. Eventually it would get too much, but initially it was what let Shane feel his body. Sometimes after sex he felt too disconnected, blown apart, like different parts of him were going to float up to the ceiling. Ilya kept him in place. With the one arm Ilya left free, Shane ran his nails along Ilya's spine, waiting for him to come down from the ceiling too.

Eventually, with a small whoop of triumph, Ilya rolled off Shane so they lay beside each other on the bed. Shane shook out his hand that Ilya had been lying on and Ilya watched with a satisfied expression, somehow able to feel smug about giving Shane pins and needles. Shane shoved him and Ilya laughed, even though Shane was pretty sure he didn't know why Shane had done it. They stared at the ceiling for a while and then Ilya laughed again, for no discernible reason, and Shane could hear he was a little more together. Shane pulled himself into sitting against the headboard, looked down at Ilya.

"It was a weird game tonight," he said. It helped him to make a little normal conversation before it all ended. Helped make the come down less sudden. "There was no energy. I know that happens sometimes but I always hate it, almost more than a bad game."

Ilya nodded, took a few breaths before responding. "Americans love to say- win is a win, but I do not like these ones. I do not like celebrating them."

"You only win because someone has to," Shane said, trying not to be endeared by the goofy voice Ilya always used for quoting Americans. "I don't know. I guess we're not comfortable with how much of the game is just random."

"Control freaks," Ilya said, gesturing between them.

"Right," Shane said, smiling a little.

They quieted again, and Shane predicted it the second before Ilya said, "I should go."

Shane nodded.

"It was good," Ilya said.

“It’s always good,” Shane said, without really meaning to, and it came out sounding kind of sad.

Ilya gave him a look, almost warning, but said nothing. The bed jostled as he stood. For a moment he looked like someone who'd walked into a room and forgotten why, just standing there aimlessly. It passed, and he grabbed at the mess of his clothes in the middle of the floor. Shane tried not to watch him dress but he was bright on the periphery of Shane's vision. He noticed when Ilya paused with his jeans half way up his legs. “Oh,” Ilya said. “Okay, the girl is why Pike hit me, yes?”

“Yes,” Shane said.

Ilya laughed.

“Shut up,” Shane said. “He was looking out for me.”

“I know,” Ilya said, sobering but still smiling. “Makes me respect him, a little. Is important for players to have their captain’s back.”

“Right,” Shane said.

“You are close, he is good friend?”

For a moment Shane got distracted watching Ilya maneuver the button of his jeans. Then he said, “Yeah.”

Ilya nodded, looked up at Shane. “He has little kids, yes?”

Shane frowned. “Yeah. Why?”

Ilya shrugged and finished getting dressed. When he was standing by the bedroom door, seconds from being gone from Shane’s life for another two months, he said, “I didn’t think about how you found out. My teammates talked?”

“Yeah,” Shane said. “I think just to Hayden.”

“Okay,” Ilya said. “They will not tell anyone else.”

Shane closed his eyes. “Thank you.”

“Anything for you,” Ilya said, clicking the door shut after him, and Shane had to laugh.

End Notes

okay well... thank you for reading and i hope you enjoyed! comments always deeply appreciated <3

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