i wouldn't stop for red lights

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Characters:	Ilya Rozanov, Shane Hollander, Rose Landry, Svetlana Vetrova, Cliff Marlow | Cliff Marleau, Ottawa Centaurs Team Ensemble (Game Changers), Background & Cameo Characters
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by isnt_that_wizard

Summary

“You know why I got them, yes?”

“I know why you think you got them.”

“Is our anniversary.”

“No, it’s not.”

The sound of Shane’s stick blade hitting another puck reverberated through the otherwise empty rink.

“I am the kind of guy who remembers those things,” Ilya leaned as close as he dared, snatching one of the pucks and taking a shot of his own before Shane could go again. He let out a pleased hum at himself as it sank into the upper left corner.

“You’re fucking not. You’re the kinda guy who gets his roommate flowers to be an asshole, actually. You know, I’ve never met a single other person who’s ever done that.”

Ilya gave an exaggerated pout, “You are being mean to me on our roommate anniversary.”

“Are you going to do this every fucking year?”

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Ilya buys Shane flowers to celebrate the anniversary of them living together in their university apartment. Shane finds this a particularly asshole move from Ilya, considering they started living together in September and it's currently January. They spend most of the day arguing about it, until Shane finally comes clean about the deeper reason his roommate's "gift" has left him so off-kilter all day.

Notes

i've been rewatching the west wing lately and when i got to 17 people and was listening to josh & donna argue about the flowers & the anniversary of when she started working for him, and really the END LINES of that whole thing, i thought to myself ".... oh boy i can make that hollanov", so here we are!!! if you're familiar with what i'm talking about, i think you'll have some fun with this fic, and if you're not - STRAP IN YOU'RE GONNA LOVE IT! that

whole episode ends up being some of my favorite josh/donna romantic lead up moments, especially the ENDING. if y'all don't know. god. i really hope you enjoy this fic

but since overall idea was borrowed from another show, it's worth mentioning that some of the dialogue has been directly taken out of the west wing. i own no rights the west wing nor the game changers universe - i'm just playing around in their sandboxes!

anyway, hope y'all enjoy! i had a lot of fun with this one. it's a college/university au that has very little to do with that setting and very little world building done because i was way more focused on getting the characters to the point i wanted to get them to, but i think it worked out in the end. hopefully. if you hate it i'll cry, so just don't tell me. okay have fun reading!

See the end of the work for more notes

Ilya was already on the ice, mindlessly shooting off pucks into the net, by the time Shane showed up. It was not usual for him to beat Shane to practice; it was not usual for *anyone* to beat Shane to practice. The man was so dedicated to arriving brutally early that he planned his class schedule each semester around arriving so early. But Ilya's Psych & Law class had gotten cancelled today, and admittedly, he had been a little eager to finally see Shane's reaction, so rather than grabbing a coffee or wasting time at the student union or bothering Svetlana at her job at the campus bookstore until she told him who it was she was seeing lately - he was sure there was *someone,* she was smiling at her phone way too much - he was here at practice. Earlier than he had ever been, even as an assistant captain.

He'd been waiting all day for this.

Ilya knew Shane must have been surprised to see him, for the way he faltered just slightly as he stepped out into the rink, but the other didn't comment. Nor did he acknowledge Ilya. Instead, he simply took off at an aggressive pace, doing laps around the ice, the way Ilya knew he always did to start warming himself up. Ilya just watched him go, letting his stick dangle from his glove; it was only in his own mind that Ilya would admit that Shane truly was faster than him. They'd timed it, a while back, Bood standing by with a stopwatch while they imitated something like they'd see in the skills competition at NHL All Stars.

Shane had barely beat him. A tie, really. Partial seconds *shouldn't* count.

And frankly, Ilya did still stand by that. He would *also* swear up and down that Bood was an impartial judge who probably *wanted* to see Ilya fail!

But it was, perhaps, also true that Ilya was only putting up the argument for so long because it was still making Shane laugh every time they got into it again.

Not that he'd ever admit *that* aloud, either.

When Shane finished his laps, Ilya grinned, pushing off towards him.

“Shane!” he greeted cheerfully. In return, he got a glare.

“Rozanov. Aren’t you supposed to be in class?”

Ilya waved him off, “Was cancelled. Did you see the flowers this morning?”

Shane’s jaw tensed, but Ilya kept grinning, swinging his stick wistfully back and forth against the ice like a little kid.

“Yes, I did,” Shane declared dryly, moving to skate away towards the pile of pucks Ilya had left on the ice. Ilya only followed behind.

“You like them?”

“They were very pretty.”

“You know why I got them, yes?”

He moved out of the way as Shane lined up a shot, which landed in the back of the net so hard Wyatt should be grateful he was nowhere near the rink right now.

“I know why you *think* you got them.”

“Is our anniversary.”

“No, it’s not.”

The sound of Shane's stick blade hitting another puck reverberated through the otherwise empty rink.

"I am the kind of guy who remembers those things," Ilya leaned as close as he dared, snatching one of the pucks and taking a shot of his own before Shane could go again. He let out a pleased hum at himself as it sank into the upper left corner.

"You're fucking not. You're the kinda guy who gets his roommate flowers to be an asshole, actually. You know, I've never met a single other person who's ever done that."

Ilya gave an exaggerated pout, "You are being mean to me on our roommate anniversary."

"Are you going to do this every fucking year?"

"Is special day, Hollander. Deserves flowers."

Shane let out a sound akin to a growl, turning towards Ilya just as he took another shot. The puck missed the net, though Ilya didn't bother commenting on it. Shane's eyes were dark as he glared at Ilya, his cheeks flushed in a way that Ilya knew couldn't be blamed just on the cold of the rink. His freckles stood out a little more against the rest of his skin, the way they always did when he went pink like this.

"We started living together in September, this is *January*, and you're an idiot."

Ilya hummed, "The first time, yes, but there was a while when you were not living there."

"That's not true, asshole."

"You moved *back* into our apartment in January. That is one I choose to celebrate because it is only one when you started living with me but did not leave to go live with your boyfriend."

“A couple nights a week sleeping over is not *living with-”*

Ilya scoffed, “*Every night* a week, for two months. I saw you in dining hall and for hockey.”

Shane scoffed, louder than Ilya had.

“You moved out to live with terrible ex-boyfriend who treated you like a housewife,” Ilya reiterated, jutting up his chin a little. “Why you call *me* an asshole in comparison to *that-”*

“Oh, shut up, Rozanov! Don’t you ever get tired of the sound of your own voice?” Shane exclaimed, throwing his hands up.

“No,” Ilya threw back petulantly.

“Fucking figures,” Shane rolled his eyes.

“You know, Hollander, most people receive beautiful flowers and say *thank you*.”

“I can think of a few other words I’d like to say instead,” Shane raised an eyebrow at him.

Ilya smirked, “Mm, promise?”

“You know what-”

“Hey, what are you guys both doing here so early?” a voice came from behind them, and Ilya couldn’t help the spike of disappointment, but he still turned to greet their left wing with a nod of his head.

“I’m always here,” Shane answered, waving to Troy. “Ilya’s torturing me.”

“Just a normal day, then?” Troy grinned as he came to a stop next to them.

“Barrett, let me ask you-”

“Rozanov, *don’t-”*

Troy let out a sigh, shaking his head. “I’d say I don’t even have the time, but we’re all an hour fucking early for practice. Let me guess, whatever this is will be the only thing the two of you are talking about the entire time?”

“I’d rather not talk to him at all right now,” Shane glared.

Ilya let out an affronted noise. “It’s our *anniversary!”*

“I hate your guts.”

Troy made a noise of shock, looking back and forth between them, landing with an especially pointed stare at Ilya that he ignored.

Shane slapped another puck into the net.

• • •

“What’s wrong with those two?” Ilya overheard, about halfway through practice. A few of the younger team members were huddled together during the break, mostly staring at Shane, who was passing off a water bottle over to Hayden Pike, but shooting glances over to Ilya, who was leaning back against the boards nearby, only half listening to Bood tell him about the date he was planning for Cassie this weekend. He could almost laugh at their lack of subtlety, or their impression that, apparently, Ilya had such poor hearing that he would be unable to hear them gossiping about himself and their captain from only a few feet away.

Though he did suppose it was a fair question. These days, it was rare to ever see him and Shane separated, especially during practice. They were a well-oiled machine, the power duo, so in sync with one another it was scary. Today, though, Shane had spent whatever time he could practically ignoring him, shooting him the same glares he had since the second he’d set foot on the ice.

“I gave Shane flowers this morning,” Ilya interrupted Bood, directing his words over to the freshmen. They all turned to him with shocked, bashful looks on their faces as they did. “He is still working on best way to say thank you.”

A moment later, a water bottle went soaring by Ilya’s head, clattering into the plexiglass behind him. Ilya let out a yelp as it hit, jerking away so fast it strained something in his neck painfully. All of their heads snapped to where Shane was still standing with Hayden, now both of them without a water bottle as it rolled to lay against one of Bood’s skates. Ilya made eye contact with his friend, who blinked at him once, then lifted a hand and directed his middle finger in Ilya’s direction.

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When Ilya stopped at home after practice to grab a textbook he’d forgotten for his evening class, he couldn’t help but notice the flowers still on the counter. They’d be hard to miss.

Ilya had admittedly gone a little bit overboard. It was an overflowing bouquet of Asiatic Lilies, which had these been interspersed with whatever the florist had thought would look best. Ilya didn’t really know what most of the other flowers were. But there were a lot of them, practically bursting out of a vase that had a light blue ribbon wrapped around it, the ends of which were curled and cascading down to rest against their kitchen island. He’d been very proud of it, when he’d gone early to pick it up this morning, right when the floral shop had opened.

Ilya had timed everything perfectly. He'd woken early - at least, early for him, anyway - timing it out so he'd returned with the bouquet while Shane was in the shower. He'd never been so happy for his friend's strict routine each morning. Then, after arranging them just so on the island, next to the blender so Shane couldn't possibly miss them when he wandered into the kitchen to make his smoothie, Ilya had left the apartment once more, right back on his usual schedule to make his first class of the day, with an evil professor who chose to offer a degree-required class as *only* an 9am option.

Everything had gone according to plan.

And the flowers were still there, sitting on their island. They'd been moved, now sat directly in the middle, rather than off to the side in the area where Shane set his blender out every night so he didn't need to deal with getting it out in the mornings. The arrangement didn't look any different than the last time Ilya had seen it. The lilies were still bright and blooming, the ribbon still glittering ever so slightly under their kitchen light.

Though Ilya could swear there was a little bit more water in the vase than there had been this morning.

He stood there for a moment, blinking at it. He had to be imagining it.

Still, the thought made him grin to himself as he stepped further into their shared apartment, heading towards his room to collect the textbook he needed.

• • •

"Oh, hey!" Rose said, her mouth still chewing around the last bits of food in her mouth, though she brought her hand up to cover it. "Shane, you never finished telling me about those flowers earlier!"

Ilya immediately perked up, pausing from where he'd been lifting his fork to instead turn to Shane with a grin.

“You told her about the flowers?”

As usual, the group of them - Ilya, Shane, Rose, Svetlana - were grabbing a late dinner together. They all almost always had an evening class of some sort these days, so they’d gotten in the habit of it early last year, and now it was a daily occurrence, unless work, a game, or a date got in the way. They were joined, sometimes, by whomever else from one of their friend groups or teams happened to be around - today, it was Cliff Marlow and Rose’s friend Gloria, both of whom almost immediately looked out of depth with the conversation.

“No, I didn’t,” Shane responded, continuing to poke at the sad salad he’d built from their pathetic excuse of a dining hall’s options. Ilya had argued to go quite literally any other place on campus that served actual food, but both Rose and Sveta had turned their puppy-eyed looks on him about being tired and not wanting to walk fifteen minutes across campus, so the late-hour residential dining hall it was. Ilya silently slid his plate closer to Shane, hoping he’d take the hint and steal a bite or two of Ilya’s pasta rather than continue to eat his sad spinach.

“You said you had flowers in your apartment,” Rose frowned, looking between them, confused.

“I was *complaining* to her about the flowers,” Shane clarified, stabbing his fork forcefully into a few penne noodles.

“I got them for Shane,” Ilya said with a grin, ignoring the way Sveta raised an eyebrow at him, humming into her glass of coke.

“Really?” Rose asked.

“What’s the occasion, Ilyusha?” Sveta asked, drumming her fingernails against her glass with a grin that Ilya didn’t like.

“Nothing,” Shane cut in, his voice sharp.

“Anniversary.”

“It is *not* our anniversary.”

“Shane doesn’t like to talk about it,” Ilya directed towards Gloria and Marlow, who were both watching the four of them like a tennis match.

“I really, really don’t,” Shane followed up, then stole some more pasta.

“. . . Cool,” Marlow nodded.

“Oh, this is about your fucking moving in together anniversary thing. What kind of flowers were they?*”* Rose asked, and Ilya was glad to have Shane’s death glare directed at someone else for a moment.

After a few beats of awkward silence around the table, Rose rolled her eyes, but held her hands up in surrender. “You said *you* don’t want to talk about it.”

“Lilies,” Ilya answered, and Shane’s glare was right back on him.

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After they’d finished dinner, Shane and Ilya walked back to their apartment together, same as they always did. They were quiet, just walking side by side, shoulders bumping every once in a while. Ilya liked the walks like these. It was comfortable. Sometimes they talked, rambling about their classes or hockey or what Shane’s parents had been up to recently, but other days it was just quiet like this.

They'd formed a comfortable routine over the past four years. At the start, living together had sort of been by chance. Ilya had been an international student stuck in a shitty dorm room with an equally shitty roommate, Shane had had an actual apartment with a spare room and rent that was being half covered by his parents, they'd already known each other from early season training on the hockey team, and the couple of mutual friends they'd made thought it would be a perfect match.

Perfect might have been overstating it. A lot. They could have killed each other the first few months. Ilya and Shane had both suspected that a few of the vets on the team at the time had actually placed bets on which one of them would go full Tanya Harding on the other first.

Eventually they had figured it out. Found common ground. Stopped being just teammates and reluctant roommates and instead became actual *friends* who knew each other so well that sometimes Ilya didn't know what to do with it all.

Ilya bumped their shoulders together on purpose this time, causing Shane to look at him, but Ilya passed it off like an accident, even though he knew there was a ghost of a smile on his own face. Shane kept looking at him.

"You know you've been a dick today," Shane eventually broke the silence.

Ilya hummed.

"This is really what you're going to do? Just. . . snark me every fucking January?"

Ilya blinked at him, "Hollander, what the fuck is *snark?"*

Shane just made a noise from the back of his throat, waving his hand in the air as if that explained it. "It's. . . whatever the hell you've been doing today instead of learning how to read a fucking calendar."

Ilya couldn't help the snicker that made its way out of his mouth at Shane's explanation, though he tried to stifle it with a hand over his mouth. His friend stared at him, as if insulted by Ilya's audacity, but then after a moment, Shane let out a laugh of his own, shaking his head.

"Jesus. Fuck."

"Sorry," Ilya tried to say, but he only laughed again.

"Whatever," Shane rolled his eyes. They were almost to the apartment now. "You really have been a dick. I can't believe you bought me fucking *flowers.* I hate you.*"*

Ilya ducked his head, grinning. Shane's shoulder bumped his again.

• • •

It was about after the sixth time that Shane shifted in his seat, letting out a sigh, that Ilya gave up and reached for the remote, pausing the recap commentary from last night's Boston-Philadelphia game.

"Shane. What is wrong with you?" Ilya asked dryly.

Shane sighed once again, this time sounding less like he was uncomfortable or trying to sort through something in his own head and more like he'd completely resigned himself to a fate he didn't want. Ilya stared at him, unable to help the way his eyebrows ticked down in the beginnings of a frown. Then, Shane moved, turning his body completely so he was now facing Ilya on the sofa, one leg tucked underneath himself and his hands folded in his lap.

"This looks serious," Ilya tried, giving Shane a teasing grin as he mirrored his posture jokingly, folding his own hands and straightening his back to his full height.

“It’s not,” Shane shook his head, though his tone betrayed him. “Or - I don’t know, maybe it is. Just listen to me, okay?”

Instantly, Ilya relaxed himself, smile falling off his lips and brow furrowing deeper. For now, he kept his hands clasped together, if for no other reason than resisting the urge to reach out and rest one on Shane’s knee.

“Okay,” Ilya agreed, as serious as he’d just mocked Shane for being.

Shane nodded. The room was silent between them, for a minute, the television still paused on the recap. Ilya didn’t push; he was used to letting Shane gather himself when he needed to, especially when he got like this.

“I didn’t move out on you,” Shane began, the words sounding almost pushed from his throat.

Ilya felt something sharp in his chest. “Hollander-”

“No, *listen.”*

Ilya closed his mouth.

“I didn’t move out on you, and I wasn’t going to. I never planned to, okay? I know I was spending a lot of time at Brady’s place then, but I *didn’t* and I *wasn’t* moving out. Especially not a couple fucking months after we renewed our lease, and I think you’ve always fucking known that. But just in case you don’t, I’m gonna give you a little gift right now, one that you really don’t deserve, but-”

“Hollander-” Ilya felt a little out of breath at Shane’s declaration, accented by the view of the flowers on the kitchen island that he could see right over Shane’s shoulder.

“Fucking *Christ,* Rozanov, what part of listening is so hard for you?” Shane huffed in exasperation, but he was smiling a little bit, too.

“Sorry,” Ilya responded quietly, gesturing for Shane to continue.

“When I got back, after Christmas that year, do you remember - I was wearing a wrist splint for a few weeks?”

Ilya hummed his acknowledgement, lips quirking upward. “It was actually an improvement for your backhand, I think.”

Shane laughed for a moment, shoving at Ilya’s shoulder, “Shut up. Asshole.”

Then, Ilya watched at how quickly Shane seemed to sober back up, his smile dropping as he took in a deep breath, hesitating over his next words.

“The truth is - I never told you-” Shane took another deep breath, looking *at* Ilya but not quite meeting his eyes, the way he sometimes did when he was nervous. “I got in a car accident. A few days before New Years.”

And Ilya felt the room seem to go still.

“You - *What?”*

Shane gave him a weak smile, clearly meant to be reassuring, as if every part of Ilya’s body didn’t suddenly feel like there was ice in his veins, as if his heart hadn’t begun beating like he just finished his usual cardio workout.

“It was-”

“Shane-”

“It was no big deal,” Shane shook his head.

“You told me you slipped in driveway. That it was,” Ilya waved his hand, trying to think of the words, “black ice.”

Shane huffed weakly, ducking his head with a self-depricating smile. “Yes, I did.”

“I made fun of you,” Ilya’s voice cracked. “For weeks. Canadian hockey player slipped on ice in his driveway.”

Shane didn’t lift his head, “I remember.”

“You were in a *car accident?*”

“Ilya, seriously, it wasn’t a big deal. It was just - They took me to the hospital to be safe, but my parents were at a party that night, so I called Brady to come get me, and on the way. . .” Shane sighed, glancing at the ceiling before looking back at Ilya, giving him the look he always did when he knew he was about to say something Ilya would be smug about. “He stopped and met some friends of his for a beer.”

Something in Ilya’s chest flared *hard.* He stared at Shane.

“He stopped. . . on his way to the hospital. For a *beer,”* Ilya repeated, just to be sure he had heard correctly. He couldn’t be sure what his own voice, nor his tone were doing, but Shane crossed his arms over his chest, cheeks flushing.

“Yes,” he whispered. “And so I broke up with him.”

Ilya sat up straighter on the couch. His mind felt a mess, too many thoughts going at once and yet feeling completely blank at the same time.

"Which is why I'm telling you this," Shane continued, looking at him again. "*I* broke up with *him,* okay? So stop - Stop remember two fucking months out of the *years* we've been living together. You know what I remember about that time?"

Ilya swallowed hard, not sure what to say.

"I came back from break with no boyfriend *and* a wrist splint - and everyone was treating me with kid gloves and sympathy because they assumed he'd just dumped me and moved on because he *was* the monumental fucking dickwad everyone thought he was, and I let them because it was just - it was easier than dealing with it all. And you had *every* opportunity to tell me I told you so, but you. . . I came home, and you just asked me if my mom liked the scarf I got her."

Shane smiled, his eyes a little watery. "You didn't say shit about it. We went to practice and to class and you cooked dinner. Like everything was normal. It was exactly what I needed. You didn't make fun of me - about the break-up, at least - or him, and you had every reason to."

"Shane," Ilya breathed.

"God, you're gonna make fun of him *now*, aren't you?"

"No."

That wasn't anywhere *near* the list of things Ilya would like to do.

"Because that's one of the reasons why I didn't tell you in the first place what really happened."

“I’m not going to.”

“Good,” Shane nodded into his chest. “It’s not worth it.”

“But what kind of *asshole-”*

Shane rolled his eyes with an exasperated sigh, “He was supposed to meet some friends at the bar, anyway, he stopped on the way to tell them that he couldn’t.”

“And still drank a beer?” Ilya exclaimed. “Mother*fucker-"*

“Ilya," Shane laughed. “I *broke up with him* over it, remember? Trust me, anything you have to say about it, I've already thought."

Ilya huffed, falling back into the cushions with a glare. “I will hire Etsy witch to curse him."

“Does this make you feel good?” Shane asked, a teasing lilt to his tone. “Everything you ever thought about him was right.”

Ilya *didn’t* feel good, no. He had *never* wanted to be right. It was undeniable that he had never liked Brady. He hadn't liked him when they'd been introduced as a result of he and Shane sharing a group project, he hadn't liked him when Shane came home from their first date with a shy smile on his face, he hadn't liked him when they'd all been out to a bar after a game and Ilya’d caught him with an arm around Shane's waist and his eyes trailing after a guy cleaning tables. He hadn't liked him when he'd told Shane that he cared too much about hockey, or when his grin grew more and more smug every day and his attitude more self-centered with nothing to back it up and everything about him more awful, or when he’d overheard him make a joke about Shane being “the skirt” in their relationship to one of his friends, or even when he'd insulted Hayden to his face - which Ilya could usually find joy in.

Ilya had always hated him. The others, Rose and Hayden and Svetlana and the rest of their team, had all agreed with him. They had done their best to keep it from Shane, to play nice where they could, because for whatever reason Shane had *liked* the bastard, but Ilya knew they hadn't hid it well. It was no secret that *no one* had liked Brady, and they all *still* held a grudge against the guy, even if it had been two years now since Shane had broken up with him.

But Ilya hadn't wanted to be right that he wasn't good for Shane, that he'd hurt him in the end.

Fuck it, he was hiring *several* Etsy witches. And if he ever saw Brady's face again - Well.

Shane stood up from the couch, his lips still upturned as he looked down at Ilya.

"You win, okay? You are, and always have been, a better person than my ex-boyfriend. And *definitely* a better roommate."

Ilya gaped up at him. His heart clenched in his chest.

"I'm going to bed," Shane announced. The cuffs of his sweater, stretched out from where they'd been shoved up over his forearms and elbows most of the night, fell down and over his wrists, right into the middle of his palms. It wasn't until Ilya watched how the sleeves fell, at that moment, that he realized that Shane had been wearing Ilya's sweatshirt all night. He'd really had no reason to, up to that point; they were similar builds, similar heights, and they had so many overlapping items in their closet bearing the university hockey team logo. But Ilya's arms were longer. So he always sized up when he bought the sweaters.

It was like Shane had set up this whole conversation to try and kill him.

"You good if I switch off the lamps?"

Ilya just nodded, not even sure he'd processed the question. His eyes trailed after Shane as he moved through their living room, getting the light next to the sofa first, then the one next to the TV. Ilya really should just shut that off. After he was done with the lamps, Shane aimlessly straightened a few things out as he left the room. Ilya still just watched him, swallowing around the thickness in his throat.

Shane still had the ghost of a smile on his face, which he turned towards Ilya once more before moving to leave the room.

"Shane," Ilya called, voice breaking and coming out a little bit desperate sounding. His friend paused in the doorway of the living room, looking back at him. The hallway light illuminating him from behind gave him a glow, just enough that Ilya could still see the features of his face. He didn't let himself think before the next words were out of his mouth. "You know, yes? If you were in an accident. I wouldn't stop for a beer."

He could see the way the smile slowly stretched across Shane's lips, into his cheeks. If Ilya were closer, or if there were still more light, he would be able to see the way it had his freckles scrunching up below his eyes. If Ilya closed his own eyes, he probably could still see it anyway, in his memory.

But as it turned out, he didn't need to bother with that. Because Shane made his way back into the room, right up to where Ilya was still sitting on the couch.

"If *you* were in an accident, I wouldn't stop for red lights," Shane whispered.

Ilya felt as though he couldn't breathe.

Shane bent down, his face coming right near Ilya's. And even in the darkness of the room, with only the light of the hall and the glow of the TV, Ilya could see every one of those ridiculous freckles. One of his hands cupped Ilya's jaw, just a feather light touch. With the way his heart was beating now, for a moment, Ilya had to wonder if this is what dying felt like.

"The flowers are beautiful," Shane press a short, soft kiss to Ilya's cheek. "Good night, Ilya."

And then Shane was gone.

The warmth of his palm and the feel of his lips had been seared onto Ilya's skin, but his body, dressed in cotton pajama shorts and a sweatshirt he'd stolen off Ilya, were gone. Down the hall and into the bathroom for his nightly routine, as if he hadn't just possibly *killed* Ilya Rozanov where he sat.

Ilya let out a shaky breath, bringing one hand up and grazing his fingertips over where Shane's lips had been and the other hand to press over his heart.

He wasn't as oblivious as his friends liked to think he was; Ilya'd known for a couple years now the extent of his own feelings for Shane.

But he wasn't sure it had ever been so obvious to him how monumentally fucking screwed he was.

Ilya's eyes were drawn back to the flowers in the kitchen, with the wide, soft petals of yellow and orange. He thought of the smile Shane had given him, of the kiss, of his declaration.

Truly, Ilya was so, *so* screwed.

But maybe it wasn't that he felt like he was dying. Maybe he was feeling *alive.*

Ilya smiled, laughing to himself as he stood from the sofa, finally shutting off the television. He moved into the kitchen, looking at the flowers once more before he headed off to bed for the night himself.

"He wouldn't stop for red lights," he whispered to them, like he was divulging a secret, stroking the back of a finger over one of the petals, and a giddy feeling began to bubble in his chest.

End Notes

ILYA IS DOWN SO BAD GUYS. (btw so is shane, but we don't see that from ilya's pov because he just doesn't know that because he's d u m b)

i did debate having them actually get together in this fic rather than end it with ilya just giggling to himself about his crush because pulling his pigtails all day worked, but decided this was more fun. sorry for everyone who was hoping for an actual kiss - at least you got one at all because the first draft DIDN'T HAVE IT BECAUSE I'M INSANE

can you believe that in the west wing the characters who say the "i wouldn't stop for a beer"/"i wouldn't stop for red lights" lines to each other do so in season 2 and don't actually get together until season 7, which is the LAST season. do you know how crazy that makes me.

i hope you enjoyed reading this one and had some fun with it! out of the five fics i've started for this universe, this is only the second one i've actually finished lol, so i'm happy to be getting it posted. let me know what y'all thought! i'm happy to chat in the comments, or come give me a shout over on tumblr @isnt-that-wizardd <3<3<3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!