He's coming to the cottage

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He's coming to the cottage

by Nightscorpion

Summary

Shane knew that a person is incapable of pretending while asleep. One can hide their true feelings behind a hockey helmet all day long, but at night, all masks fall away. No one forced Ilya to hold him after they'd both gotten theirs. And yet he did.

Notes

Nothing motivates to remember English more than a new obsession with gay hockey players 😄 If you spot any errors, please let me know; I'd appreciate your corrections.

See the end of the work for more notes

- A translation of Он приедет в коттедж by Nightscorpion

The bedside clock showed just past six. Shane woke up because he was short of oxygen. Despite the fresh air coming from the wide-open window, his ribs felt constricted and a heat gripped his chest.
But it wasn't the heavy body pressed against his back, entwining him with all its limbs, that was causing his breathlessness. It felt right, familiar, and Shane wouldn't have traded it for the ability to take a deep breath for anything in the world.

He was suffocating from love.

Ilya slept with his nose buried in Shane's nape. His right arm was draped across Shane's chest, and his left rested under Shane's torso. A firm thigh was wedged between his legs—as if staking its claim on its territory even in sleep. Ilya was everywhere at once—Shane felt him in every cell—and yet, paradoxically, he was infinitely not enough.

His body ached sweetly. Recent kisses bloomed on his neck and collarbones as vivid constellations of hickeys. They usually didn't allow themselves to leave marks on each other, but this time there was no need to worry. They were in a remote place, and the only witnesses to the evidence could be the ducks and barnacle geese living on the lake.

The thought that they had two full weeks of seclusion and happiness ahead lifted him to the heavens and made him question the reality of it all. Yet this state wasn't new—Shane had felt this way since the day of the legendary match, in the final of which Scott Hunter had made his grand coming-out.

And if asked, Shane wouldn't have been able to say what had stunned him more—the New York Admirals captain's act or the phone call from Ilya that followed. He had died and been resurrected several times over when Ilya said he would come to the cottage.

Yes, that very cottage, the one Shane had called an "investment" but had actually bought specifically for their infrequent, yet so longed-for, meetings. And now, finally, the two-story mansion had come alive, having received the only long-awaited guest.

They had started kissing right at the threshold—as always—without even properly saying hello. Of course—it had been so long. The mere sight of Ilya triggered irreversible metamorphoses in Shane's body, and his hot, hungry lips turned him into a gelatinous mass, capable of nothing but craving moans and answering caresses.

As always, Ilya had picked him up by the thighs. Shane would never admit how, despite his feigned displeasure, it actually made him melt. He was muscular and strong, but in Ilya's arms he invariably felt like a feather.

Then their clothes flew to the floor—he wasn't allowed to neatly fold them—and he barely managed to point the way to the new bedroom, where the renovation had just been finished. It had everything for comfortable and safe seclusion—blackout curtains, soft soffit lighting, heated floors, and most importantly—a huge bed, on which Shane had specifically not slept alone, waiting for Ilya.

Of course, he wasn't against sex on the table or even by the front door, which had happened more than once; but this time they had entire holidays at their disposal. He wanted them to enjoy each other in a calm setting—not like occasional lovers, but like a real couple.

A loving couple.

And yes, Shane understood. Not the whole monologue in a foreign language, of course, but he managed to grasp the main point. He hadn't told Ilya that since they met, he had started learning Russian, including audio lessons during runs and occasionally checking a phrasebook. His knowledge was enough for the phrase "I love you."

And miraculously, he had enough restraint not to exhale in response: "I love you too, God, you have no idea how much." After all, Ilya hadn't planned any confessions that day, and pretending ignorance seemed to Shane like a show of respect for personal boundaries.

Later, having barely calmed his pounding heart, he realized Ilya hadn't exactly discovered America for him. Without fully acknowledging it, afraid to even dream of it, Shane had nevertheless intuitively understood that his feelings were mutual.

He didn't know when the answering fire had ignited in his beloved's soul. It's just that at some point, Ilya started looking at him differently. Ilya's gaze had always bored into him attentively and searchingly; but one day, timid, barely noticeable sparks of tenderness appeared in it. Seeing them for the first time, Shane convinced himself he was imagining things, but then it happened again, and again, and again.

Shane finally understood everything the day Ilya asked him to stay the night at his penthouse. They had slept in an embrace then too—not as tightly as now—but Ilya had pressed against him from behind, and his breath had tickled the hairs on Shane's nape.

Shane knew that a person couldn't pretend while asleep. You could hide your true feelings behind a hockey helmet all day long, but at night all masks fall off. No one forced Ilya to hug him after multiple orgasms, when both had gotten their fill. And yet he did it.

And then he cooked them tuna and treated Shane to ginger ale. He asked if Shane liked girls and told him, almost as if justifying himself, about Svetlana, assuring him there was "nothing serious" between them. Shane nodded and pretended he didn't care, while burning with jealousy inside.

And later, breathless from simultaneous orgasm, they called each other by their first names for the first time, and Shane's insides flipped so violently that he cowardly ran away—something he's certainly not proud of. But the way Ilya was upset, how he failed to hide behind his usual irony the bitterness of Shane's departure, made it clear: Shane wasn't the only one. There were two of them.

This realization settled inside like a smoldering flame, sometimes warming, sometimes burning his soul with the impossibility of finding an outlet for these feelings. Yes, they loved each other, but so what? What awaited them besides rare, stolen meetings fraught with enormous risk?

The risk of losing everything they lived and breathed for—hockey, fans, worldwide fame, multimillion-dollar contracts, and, much more precious—the acknowledgment and respect of their loved ones. In the current reality, the knowledge of mutual feelings was no less painful than it was joyful.

But now, after Scott's sensational act, tiny sprouts of hope for a different outcome had appeared in Shane's soul.

For a life where there would be no fear of exposure because, inspired by their colleague's example and the stands roaring with delight, they would tell the world themselves who they were to each other.
Because Ilya had already taken a step by coming to his cottage. Because after his father's death, he didn't want to return to homophobic Russia. Because there wasn't a single goddamn reason that could stop them from trying.

Trying to be together. To love each other. To take care.

Moving carefully within the tight embrace, Shane turned to his other side, facing Ilya. His arm still ached a little from the injury, but he could afford to lie on it for at least a few minutes to admire his sleeping beloved.

He was beautiful. A faint smile played on his face, as if Ilya was having a pleasant dream. His powerful chest lifted a golden cross with every breath—a cross Ilya never took off. There was something mesmerizing about watching it move rhythmically up and down.

Besides that piece of jewelry, Ilya wore nothing, just like Shane himself, and it felt profoundly right. Such a body—Shane knew for sure—shouldn't be hidden. At least not from him. The bedside lighting, successfully replacing moonlight, allowed him to see the curves of biceps that looked as if carved by a talented sculptor.

Everything below was hidden from view, but Shane knew that picture too well. It had been imprinted on the back of his eyelids back in 2008, when they first found themselves in the shower together. Ilya's perfect, as if photoshopped body had stunned him—a seventeen-year-old kid back then—and the cheeky smirk had only added fuel to the fire.

It was later that Shane realized Ilya's provocative behavior all those years had been nothing but "pulling pigtails." Unable to express his interest otherwise, Ilya showed it as best he could. Crude remarks, mischievous winks, a joint selfie in front of a full hall, shaking wet hair onto Shane's clothes—it was all about unrealized feelings. Ilya had never hated him but had tried to get closer by all available means.

Shane smirked: what a child. Sometimes Ilya amazed him with childish antics, and other times he seemed too mature for his years—probably due to what he'd been through in his family. But now his face was relaxed, even peaceful. Shane watched him without blinking. Ilya was different every second, and missing precious moments seemed simply sacrilegious.

As if sensing the gaze on him, Ilya stirred and opened his eyes. Shane immediately closed his eyelids, pretending to be asleep as a joke, but gave himself away with a happy smile.

“What time is it? Why aren’t you sleeping?” Ilya asked, and his hoarse voice combined with the Russian accent sent shivers down Shane’s body again.

“Guarding your sleep.”

“Hollander, you’re a goddamn romantic,” Ilya said, yawning, but suspiciously resembled a contented cat. A very large and warm one.

“Hungry?” Shane asked, wanting to jokingly repeat their dialogue.

According to his plan, Ilya was supposed to ask: “What do you mean?” and he would reply: “For food, invert”—and then go make them breakfast, because the fridge was packed, and the desire to take care of his dear guest pulsed at Shane’s fingertips.

But something else happened. Ilya flipped over, hovered above Shane, and said:

“Very much.”

The cross brushed against his collarbone, and a firm erection pressed into his thigh. Shane smirked:

“Oh God, I meant to feed you, you animal.”

At the sight of the disheveled curls framing Ilya’s sleepy face, Shane’s own cock began to twitch with interest.

“I’m on a special diet. I only consume pure protein.”

“There isn’t any. You fucked every last drop out of me yesterday.”

That was true. The first orgasm had happened from handjobs soon after Ilya dropped his travel bag by the threshold. Then he fucked Shane long and measuredly, pressing him into the orthopedic mattress of the huge bed. And then they went to the shower, where they took turns going down on each other. So Shane had every reason for such statements. Unfortunately, Ilya didn't care about it.

“Bullshit,” he replied and kissed him deeply.

Feeling the confident tongue exploring his mouth, Shane thought he might have to take back his words. When Ilya moved to his neck and collarbones, Shane wasn’t thinking about anything at all anymore.
Blood boiled in his veins, rushing—of course—to the organ that was rising as if on command, forgetting yesterday’s pleasures. Ilya approached it with a trail of dizzying kisses on his chest and stomach.

Shane anticipated how good it would be—just like their first time and yet a thousand times better. Ilya’s tongue was very close to the twitching head, and Shane could almost feel its phantom touch. But when mere millimeters remained between the tongue and the aroused flesh, his partner stopped. Shane thought Ilya wanted to be begged (and he was ready), or simply decided to tease him, as he loved to do, with Shane defenseless in his arousal.

However, something else happened. Blowing on the head and running a hand over his scrotum, which made Shane jerk violently, Ilya said:

“Turn over.”

“Why?” Shane didn’t understand.

Ilya loved giving him blowjobs, and the fact that he stopped at the last second was alarming.

“Come on, don’t argue.”

“Are you sure?..”

“More than.”

Shane thought that perhaps Ilya was too aroused to give pleasure only to him and wanted to enter. Generally, he was fine with that—it was hard to imagine sex with Ilya that he wouldn’t enjoy, but…

Mother of God. What was he planning to do?!

Ilya didn’t enter, didn’t stretch him with fingers, no. He kissed the tailbone and moved to the left buttock.

A flush of heat suffused Shane’s face. The only good news was that Ilya couldn’t see it. At least because Shane was turned away, at most because his ass—specifically, now his right buttock—blocked the view a little.

These kisses were teasing, promising… and even a little frightening. Something hinted that Ilya wouldn’t stop at the buns, but Shane still had a chance to save himself.

Or not.

“Ilya… What are you planning?”

“Not hard to guess.”

“You don’t need to, let’s just…”

“Don’t need to?” He spread the cheeks and, fuck, licked broadly from the seam to the tailbone.

A shudder wracked Shane’s body. The drawn-out moan that spilled into the air seemed foreign to Shane.

“What did you say? I didn’t catch it, sorry,” Ilya said and repeated the maneuver.

“A-ah,” escaped Shane’s chest. “Fucking hell, stop, Rozanov.”

“You’re so cute when you’re shy.”

“Shut u-u-up.”

“Okay.”

Ilya fell silent, as requested, but didn’t close his mouth—which made a substantial difference—and continued his shameless activity. Shane burned with shame, he drowned in it, he simply embodied shame—probably not for nothing his own name rhymed with it.

It was terrible—terribly arousing, exciting, and hot. They had never done this before. Why had they never done this before?!

Ilya’s tongue dug into his secret place with burning kisses, each sending thousand-ampere electric shocks through his body. He licked energetically, pushed the tip inside, then treacherously changed rhythm and barely slid over the folds.

Shane was torn between embarrassment, which hadn’t faded over the years of rare meetings, and unbearable pleasure from the skillful tongue. But then Ilya lifted him, putting him on all fours, and wrapped his fingers around Shane’s cock.

Arousal surged anew. Shane moaned, feeling his restraints retreat, melting under the maddening caresses. And he let go, relaxed, allowed himself to feel every moment of pleasure and to gift confirmations in return.

Ilya loved it when he was loud, and he was.

The orgasm approached softly, looming deep inside, growing like a snowball and exploding into a supernova. Shane collapsed onto the bed, not caring about the soiled sheets, and soon felt warm drops on his back, followed by an eighty-kilogram body.

He felt as if he had died and gone to heaven—and he wasn’t even against it.

The first thing he heard, having caught his breath, was:

“See? And you said you couldn’t. Little liar.”

Shane shook his head:

“God, fuck. I hate you.”

Ilya twisted his trademark smirk:

“And so do I.”

* * *

“What are we going to do?” Ilya asked after they demolished half a tray of chicken wings with baked potatoes (“Seriously, potatoes? Our Mr.-I’m-on-a-macrobiotic-diet made junk food?” – “Oh, fuck off”).

“Anything.” Shane walked to the shelf and took a sheet of paper from one of the shelves. “Look, I planned a bunch of stuff.”

“Did you really make a list? You’re such a nerd, Hollander.”

“Actually, I wanted it to be fun,” Shane pouted.

Ilya walked over and pecked the tip of his nose.

“Sorry. I’ll have a great time with you no matter what.”

“Why? I’m boring.”

“And I have bad taste in men. Go on, read your list.”

Shane couldn’t stay angry at him for long.

“First, there’s a billiard room in this house.”

“You want to knock balls around? Again?”

“Bad, Ilya, very bad. Two points for humor.”

“I’ll survive. What’s next?”

“We could do yoga…”

“Next item.”

“Too bad, you could use some stretching. Okay, there’s a forest nearby…”

“Let’s save it for tomorrow.”

“Pool with a hot tub.”

“Pools are for losers. You have a cottage on the lake, right?”

“Yes, but the water’s quite fresh.”

“We’ll warm up,” Ilya winked. “Let’s go.”

They took a boat from the pier and started rowing with four hands, but Shane thought it was moving too fast. The views around were mesmerizing, and he wanted to slow down, fully savor the moments of such a rare vacation where there was no need to rush. He laid his oars on the bottom of the boat and started watching—not at the Canadian meadows, but at Ilya against their backdrop, which was much more attractive.

The day was sunny, unusually warm. Ilya wore a tight tank top with a deep neckline, offering a view of everything Shane adored. He admired how the biceps rolled under golden skin. The immortal vampire Edward, had he seen Ilya at that moment, would surely have died of envy.

Ilya brought the boat to the middle of the lake, set aside the oars, and stood up. The boat tilted dangerously.

“Oops, looks like we hit a storm,” he said, rocking the boat even more.

“What are you doing, you idiot? We’re going to capsize.”

“Oh no! We can’t let that happen, help me!”

And for some reason, Shane fell for the provocation, stood up, and became the target of a new prank. Ilya looked at him like a female mantis at an unlucky suitor and pushed him into the water.

“Fuck you!” Shane exclaimed, spitting out water. “This lake is deep!”

He, of course, could swim perfectly well, but Ilya couldn’t have known that. Unless he guessed. Apparently, he himself did not give in, because:

“What’s the matter, Hollander? Afraid of drowning?” the asshole seemed to be openly enjoying his fall. “Grab my shoulders, I’ll save you!” Ilya shouted and jumped into the lake after him.

Truth be told, Shane had drowned long ago.

When Ilya surfaced, Shane splashed water at him, wanting revenge. They fooled around until their eyes teared from the water, then swam close to each other and pressed their lips, blue from cold, together.

Climbing back into the boat, Shane couldn’t help but notice how beautifully Ilya’s nipples showed through the soaked tank top, and also—how adoringly he looked at him. And he thought how lucky he was to have the best boyfriend in the world…

“Boyfriend”? They really needed to talk.

Back home, warmed up and dried off, they settled in front of the TV with chips and drinks. Promising himself this was the only cheat meal of the month, Shane turned on the sports channel.

He planned to snuggle under Ilya’s wing and watch some match, discuss playing techniques, maybe even gossip about familiar hockey players, but he nearly spilled ginger ale on the sofa when he heard:

“Perhaps I should go.”

To say that Shane was stunned is to say nothing. When Marlow hit him on the ice, it hadn’t hurt as much as this did now.

“Why?” he whispered in a strained voice.

“I should go fuck you again,” Ilya finished.

“Asshole,” Shane exhaled, unable to rid his voice of the overwhelming tenderness, and threw a pillow at Ilya.

“I know,” he replied smugly. “That’s why you like me.”

“Not because of that.”

“You have terrible taste in men too.”

“Fuck off.”

“Better you come to me.”

Ilya pulled him close and kissed him deeply, while his hands roamed his back, pulling off the t-shirt. Shane’s body responded eagerly, but his soul asked for something else.

“Wait. I… want to talk to you.”

“Don’t, Hollander. Everything’s fine. Don’t start.”

“No, you don’t understand. I just want to talk, not necessarily seriously. Although we should talk about serious things too, but… I realized that in all the years we’ve known each other, we’ve barely said a hundred words to each other.”

“Next you’ll say we never go anywhere.”

“That’s a fact.”

Ilya attached himself to his neck again.

“Rozanov, stop.”

No reaction.

“Ilya, don’t.”

Again, nothing.

So Shane gathered all his willpower and gently but firmly pushed him away. Ilya’s face showed utter astonishment.

“What? I give in to you so often you forget I’m strong too.”

“You give in to me not because you’re weak. But because you like it.”

“Yes, I like it. I’m not arguing.”

“Do you give in on the ice too?”

“Yeah, dream on.”

“I do let you.”

“Like hell you do.”

Ilya sighed, chastely pulled him close, apparently resigned that sex wasn’t happening, and kissed the top of his head.

“Well, let’s chat then.”

After a short silence, Shane dared.

“I need to confess something to you.”

“You don’t have to, Shane. I know,” he whispered in his ear.

“No, you don’t. Look what I have.”

Extricating himself from the embrace, he walked to the shelf.

“Don’t tell me it’s another list.”

“In a way, yes,” Shane smiled and handed him a softcover volume.

“English-Russian dict… Oh no,” Ilya groaned.

“I’m afraid so.”

“How long have you had it?”

“Long enough.”

If the phrase “five stages” had a human form, it would definitely be Ilya. Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance scrolled across his face like a ticker tape. He looked at Shane with a gaze that probably tried to convey the disappointment of a parent whose son hadn’t lived up to expectations.

But he wasn’t a very good actor—or maybe Shane had just learned to read all the shades of his moods. Behind the feigned indignation, he saw a completely different fire light up in Ilya’s eyes. It wasn’t lust—not primarily—but warmth, care, and hope.

Yes, hope.

“Listen, Ilya. You can agree or not, but I’m going to say it because I don’t want to stay silent anymore. I realized something when my head was nearly bashed in. Essentially, life hangs by a thread. You have it today, and tomorrow you might not. It seems stupid to waste it on doubts and half-truths when you can simply… be happy?”

Ilya shook his head:

“It won’t be simple.”

“I know. But let’s figure it out? I’m ready, I… want to. I can’t be without you anymore. Not after what happened here.”

“Me neither,” Ilya whispered and held him tightly.

At that moment, Shane realized he could never give up Ilya. That he was ready to trade all his fame, money, and connections for the luxury of hugging him like this every day, sleeping together every night. For the faint trembling of light eyelashes. For disheveled curly hair. For hazel eyes looking at him, Shane, with greed and adoration.

And before getting rid of their clothes and merging with his partner again, he said in Russian:

“I love you so much. And we’ll definitely figure out what to do about it.”

End Notes

Thanks so much for reading! Come see me on X, it's only Hollanov there now: https://x.com/Nightscorpion_

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