

listen how the heart beats

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by [Sambreakdown](#)

Summary

“He’s good, Mama,” Ilya thinks, not for the first time. “He’s good. Like you.”

or, the morning after confessing their love, ilya takes a moment for himself and his mother by the lake.

Notes

title from "whim" by hayley williams, a song that i believe is so entirely ilya.

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

"He's good, Mama," Ilya thinks, not for the first time. "He's good. Like you." He whispers it into the still air in front of him, through cigarette smoke and distant loon calls.

Somehow, he woke up before Shane at some god-awful hour. He couldn't fall back asleep—didn't want to fall back asleep—so he indulged himself in the warm weight of Shane against his chest before slipping out of bed to throw on some clothes and sneak out the lighter and cigarettes he bought at the airport just a few days ago.

God, had it really only been a few days?

He brings the cigarette to his lips and takes a long drag, relishing in the familiar weight that sinks from his mouth into his chest, then back out. He can already hear Shane chastising him. *"A firepit is boring, but you bought a pack the second you exited your gate?"*

Ilya smirks. "He hates when I smoke, just like you did with Papa." Except it wasn't really the same, not entirely. His father's cigarettes were always accompanied by empty bottles and emptier glasses; Shane's eyes dance whenever he oh-so-helpfully reminds Ilya of the dangers of smoking.

"He's beautiful, Mama. I think he's the most beautiful person I've ever known. He's gorgeous and he has these incredible freckles and this boring haircut and I just love him. I love him so much and—" he laughs wetly. "He loves me, too. It's irresponsible and reckless but he doesn't *care*, Mama. Hockey is everything to him, it's his whole world. But it's cruel, and it'll be cruel to him if they knew. He's not naive or dumb; he knows what he's risking, but. Mama, he's risking it for me."

His cheeks are wet and the loons are calling and the sun is ever so higher in the sky and Shane loves him. Ilya closes his eyes tight, exhales roughly. He gently taps the ash off his cigarette against the jut of the rock by his hip. He looks up at the sky where the tops of the tree are pointing and he exhales again.

"Now I'm part of his world. He wants me there. He- he came up with an entire plan for us. He figured out how we can be together in private until maybe the world is ready. And until then he's found a way for us to be closer in public and work together. He wants us to start a charity together for the off-season. Maybe soften the blow once we finally tell everyone. Someone wants that with me, Mama; Shane fucking *Hollander* wants a future with me."

He can only shake his head. It's so ridiculous, the chances of this all happening. Of hockey, of MLH drafts, of stupid fucking rivalries. Of hotel gyms and of last minute commercial shoot changes. Of perceptive women and of horrible brothers. Of too hard checks. Of medicinal highs and of uninhibited want. Of Scott fucking Hunter somehow falling in love besides them and being just a little more brave than them. Of now feeling braver himself than maybe he should.

"I just don't understand how all of this is mine. He's *mine*."

He knows he's still crying when he tastes salt on his lips. It's cold out. Boring fucking Canada is always cold, apparently. But it feels nice, the goosebumps on his arms and chill numbing his cheeks. It sobers him. It assures him what he's feeling, every big and little thing happening in his chest and in his veins, is grounded. Real.

This thing with Shane, as impossible and irresponsible and reckless and ridiculous and unbelievably perfect as it is, it's real. Ilya is sure of that now.

"I just don't know how it's all mine."

He takes another drag and lets the quiet settle over him. It's impossible that he's here in the first place, even more so that he hasn't blown it all up yet. It's been a few days of endless Ilya, and even the most earth shattering, paradigm shifting sex can't fully compensate for that. And Shane just—he just wants more. He wants more of Ilya not just in his life, but a part of it. He wants Shane and Ilya, Ilya and Shane. And that is—no one has wanted that much of him before.

His own family couldn't even stand the sight of his name unless a dollar amount was next to it. *Not even my own mother*—no. He pauses that thought, knowing all too well where it leads. His mother loved him. It's one of the few fundamental truths he holds, right alongside his strengths in hockey and in bed. *But that love wasn't all powerful*, his brain finishes the thought, all too familiar with this one-sided conversation. His mother loved him, but that ultimately was overshadowed.

So this thing with Shane, even knowing what he does about Ilya and all his... complications, he isn't deterred. There's something he wants—a life with Ilya—and an obstacle, a hurdle. Shane approached it like he would any speed bump and found a solution. Like it was that simple. He wants Ilya, and he won't let anything stand in the way of that. Like it's one more fundamental truth for Ilya to hold fast to.

And isn't that just something.

He's not very sure about religion and gods and karmic debts, but surely Ilya didn't do enough to deserve this. He isn't nearly as charitable with his money as he should be. He isn't exactly known for his kindness. He plays hockey, he buys cars, and he sleeps around. Surely there was more left to do before this could well and truly be his.

Another loon calls, a little closer this time. Ilya has already associated the sound with Shane's steady, sure hands against his body, holding him safe and together. Loving him.

The sky is orange now. The clouds, vibrant and glowing, are reflected on the lake, across the gentle movement of the water. There's still that same chill around him, but the warmth from the sun ebbs it just enough to keep him from shivering. It reminds him of the firepit and Shane's body around his, of admissions and honesty and trust.

The sun rises, the loons call, and Ilya falls a little deeper.

Maybe this can be his.

Maybe it's worth finding out.

"Found you."

God, Ilya loves that voice. "You were looking for me?"

"Yeah, well," Shane shrugs, lifting the two mugs in answer. "I'd go into a sugar-induced coma if I drank this." He passes Ilya the mug with considerably lighter-colored coffee; it reminds him of how soft and golden Shane's skin turns when the sunlight hits it just right, like it is now.

Ilya hums when he takes a sip. It's fucking perfect, because of course it is. "Would be worth it. Although," he pauses, looking over at the man on his left until their eyes catch. "Would be second best only to a dick-induced coma."

Shane's eye roll is nullified by the fond quirk of his lips, his smile a dead giveaway; he thinks Ilya is endearing. "Sex can't put you into a coma, Ilya." Placing his own mug somewhere behind Ilya, Shane takes the blanket from his shoulder and wraps up Ilya first before slotting alongside him.

"Why not? We should try, yes? Would be worth it, I think."

Shane just shakes his head with a silent chuckle, his gaze falling on the water in front of them. A loon calls and, barely a few seconds later, another responds.

Shane's head falls against his arm, and he places a small, lingering kiss there even as Ilya takes another drag. There's no chiding comment, just a little smirk against Ilya's skin and undisturbed quiet. Them and their coffee, the sun and the loons.

He's gorgeous like this, Shane. The soft glows of the sunrise land across his skin like the pinks and oranges were made with this man in mind. His hair is more brown in this light and Ilya could swear there are hints of waves there. Maybe he can convince Shane to grow it out, just a little, just so Ilya can confirm. His eyes, round and bright and pupils blown despite the rising sun, look so different than they do on the ice, their normal sharpness rounded out.

And his freckles. God his freckles. They've multiplied somehow, spanning from the edges of his cheekbones and across the bridge of his nose. Not that they were ever hidden before, but they're innumerable now, unmistakable. Ilya wishes he could kiss each and every one, but even with all the time in the world he thinks it would be impossible. Just when he thought he had them all accounted for, another would likely appear. He idly wonders if they'll increase with age, too. *"I hope I'm there to find out, Mama."*

Ilya couldn't convince himself to look away from this man even if he needed to. If they were back on the ice or back in Boston or Montreal. Around reporters and people with phones and nosy goalies and judgy forwards. But he doesn't need to, he's allowed to stare and bask in every beautiful inch of Shane in the privacy of the trees and the lake and their very own sun. He trusts the loons to keep their secret, to hold their love as tight and safe as he will for as long as he is allowed.

He leans his head to rest atop Shane's. He exhales. He watches the sunrise. *"This is good, Mama."*

End Notes

istg ilya better have that tattoo next season

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