

the most dangerous thing (is to love)

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the most dangerous thing (is to love)

by [buckbrainrot](#)

Summary

A bottle of pills lies discarded on the floor, empty. Shane's body is splayed over his side of the bed like a ragdoll, his arm hanging off the side in a cruel caricature of how Ilya had found his mother all those years ago.

Ilya isn't sure what noise he is making. He doesn't care. His body feels like it's being ripped apart. The pain is akin to being skinned alive.

or: Ilya comes home to his worst nightmare.

Notes

tw: suicide

enjoy :) this is my first heated rivalry work but i anticipate more to come.

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

ILYA

It starts like any other normal Thursday evening does. Or, at least, as normal as Thursday evenings can be when you're still secretly fucking your archrival after moving countries and teams for him.

Ilya is wrapping up a grocery trip after a dinner with some of his teammates. He scans the aisles for Shane's favorite brand of protein powder, then his own, then moves on to buy ginger ale. God, Ilya doesn't even want to know how much money they spend on ginger ale a year.

The teenager at the cash register rings it up, and the total comes to \$170.43. Ilya's own fault, really, for buying imported vodka, but what can he say? It's just better.

He drives home with the eagerness of someone who hasn't seen his boyfriend in weeks—he'll never forget the torture of months and months apart, so if Ilya breaks the speed limit a little bit, who's to say?

The door swings open into the quiet of the cottage.

"Honey, I am home!" Ilya yells in a high pitched, obnoxious voice, dropping the groceries on the counter and moving to put the ginger ale in the fridge. There's no sarcastic reply.

That's the first sign that something is wrong.

"Shane? моя любовь?" The quiet, once peaceful, becomes deafening. Ilya drops the case of ginger ale onto the counter with a resounding thud.

He searches all the places where Shane may be out of earshot first. He does a full circle around the perimeter of the cottage, then ducks in to see if Shane is working out or skating on his practice ice. He's not.

Ilya's breathing starts to come in quicker. He frantically pulls out his phone to track Shane's location, but no, his phone is here.

When he turns into the bedroom, slamming the door against the doorstop on the wall, everything stops.

It's Ilya's worst nightmare come to life. If watching Shane go down on ice was terrifying, this was fucking primal fear. Ilya nearly retches as he claws at his chest, gasping for air.

A bottle of pills lies discarded on the floor, empty. Shane's body is splayed over his side of the bed like a ragdoll, his arm hanging off the side in a cruel caricature of how Ilya had found his mother all those years ago.

Ilya isn't sure what noise he is making. He doesn't care. His body feels like it's being ripped apart. The pain is akin to being skinned alive.

He desperately scrambles for his phone again, dialling 911 as fast as his shaking hands can manage. He puts it on speakerphone and crawls onto the bed, grasping at Shane's limp wrist and begging to find a pulse. He finds nothing.

"911, what's your emergency?" A voice crackles through the phone after what feels like an eternity.

"My—" Ilya can't fucking breathe. "He took— pills. I need help. Fuck, please, I can't lose him, please, what do I do?" He begs.

"I will send an ambulance to your location. Can you give me the address?"

Ilya rattles it off as fast as he possibly can without being unclear. His English is becoming patchier every second. He can't speak, can't think, can barely move, not when the love of his life isn't breathing.

"Okay, sir. Do you know how to take his pulse?" Ilya's fingertips burn where they are pressed against Shane's wrist. He chokes out his response.

"Да. He— he does not have." There's a pause on the other end of the line.

"Have you ever been trained in CPR?" Ilya has not. He has never regretted that fact more than he does at this moment.

"Нет." He shakes his head. "No."

"Place the heel of one hand in the center of his chest, on the lower half of the breastbone, and place your other hand on top. Lock your elbows and position your shoulders directly over your hands. Start pushing hard and fast, pressing the chest down about two inches each time. Push at a steady rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute, which for reference is about this fast—" She claps her hands. "Allow the chest to fully rise between pushes. Keep counting out loud and do not stop. Give 2 breaths every 30 compressions, tilting his head back, pinching his nose shut, and sealing your mouth over his." Ilya rushes to comply, moving Shane to the ground so he can kneel over him.

"You may hear cracking if his ribs break. This is common during CPR. It sounds scary, but think of it this way: his heart is stopped. Even if you break his ribs, it is to save his life. His heart will not keep beating if you stop CPR."

Sure enough, after about 2 minutes of what Ilya can only describe as torture, Shane's rib gives way. Ilya retches all over his hands, coating Shane's tear-stained shirt with bile, but he keeps going, clearing his throat as efficiently as he can so he can administer more rescue breaths.

—

The sound of the ambulance nearly twenty minutes later is music to his ears. Ilya silently curses Shane for the seclusion of the cottage. The paramedics pull him away from Shane and everything goes startingly fuzzy. His ears ring and his vision swims as he stands up, two sets

of hands holding him up as he nearly passes out. His visceral sobbing is dry, now, more like screaming. There are no tears left in his body to cry.

A man kneels by Shane and tears his shirt open, attaching some sort of pads to his chest, then waits. The machine starts talking, garbled medical jargon Ilya can't even begin to understand.

"He's in V-Fib. Administering shock." The paramedic shoos everyone away, lifting his own hands above his head.

"Clear!"

The convulsion of Shane's body as the paramedics administer the shock is like purgatory. Ilya's world goes still as they shock him again, then a third time.

"Fuck! We got him!" Shane's heartbeat is his salvation. Ilya clutches his hand like a lifeline as they load into the ambulance.

"How much did he take?" The question shocks him out of his stupor. "Do you know how much was in the bottle?" The paramedic is holding the orange tube up to Ilya's face. They're Ilya's painkillers from an injury, a bad hit that had left him with a fracture in his scapula. Why hadn't he fucking thrown them out? His stomach roils with guilt.

"Half, maybe. Little more than half."

The paramedic shouts a number at another paramedic, who measures out a dose of something black and feeds it into the tube that Ilya hadn't even seen them insert. He was losing time to the pure, unadulterated panic that had taken up residence in his chest, even as Shane's pulse was back. And he lost even more as they drove to the hospital, sirens ringing in his ears.

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Ilya regains awareness in a chair in the empty hospital waiting room. There is a doctor looking expectantly at him, but he had entirely missed whatever had been said. She cleared her throat and then repeated herself.

"Mr. Hollander's mother and father have been informed. They want me to tell you that they will be here as soon as they can." *Fuck*, Yuna and David. Ilya couldn't imagine how they felt. They had gone on a trip to Europe for a few days since it was the offseason, only to be told that their son was dying—had died—thousands of miles away. Ilya looks at the doctor expectantly, pulse thrumming in his ears as he awaits the important part: information about Shane's condition.

"Mr. Hollander is stable and awake. His vitals are looking good and most of the oxycodone has left his system or been neutralized by the activated charcoal."

"Can I see him?" Half of the words that had just come out of the doctor's mouth were borderline unintelligible in his exhausted state. Ilya had heard "stable and awake" and that was about it.

“Unfortunately, no. I’m sorry, Mr. Rozanov, but due to the nature of Shane’s...injury, we need to keep him on a 72-hour psychiatric hold, during which we cannot allow visitors, in order to assess what might have caused this as well as further steps.”

“But- but I—” Ilya stammers, desperate.

“I’m very sorry.”

—

It takes six more hours for Ilya to peel himself out of the chair. By some miracle, he makes it back to the cottage in one piece. Even the Tuber driver, who had clearly recognized him, took one look at Ilya and decided not to pry.

He collapses on the bed in one of the guest rooms. He can’t bring himself to enter theirs. Images of Shane, lying there still, blur into images of his mother. He curls in on himself like a child.

Fear begins to bleed into anger.

How could he do this to me?

He knows how my mother died. He knows what this could have done to me.

Anger bleeds into self-hatred.

No wonder he did this to himself.

I’m just like my father.

He hates what the anger makes him think about Shane, because it’s exactly what he’s begged people to never think about his mother.

He tears himself out of bed and pulls two bottles of vodka out of their liquor cabinet. Only half of one remains when he finally passes out.

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When Ilya wakes, Shane is 19 hours into his 72-hour hold. It’s already dark outside as he moves to make himself something to eat. He shoves 2 pieces of toasted bread down his throat, then 3 spoons of peanut butter. He doesn’t have the energy to spread it on the toast.

The rest of the hold passes in a similar fashion. Ilya ignores call after call from Yuna and David, who are struggling to get back to Canada as a bad storm is preventing flights out of Heathrow, if his phone is summarizing his notifications correctly. He feels guilty, yes, but more than that he feels empty. He doesn’t think he can muster a single word, in English or in Russian, to say to Shane’s parents. Not after this.

When the mental timer Ilya’s been keeping hits 71 hours, he shoves some things in a bag and drives to the hospital. Comfort items, mostly. Shane’s favorite hoodie. His phone. Ilya hasn’t

actually opened his own phone past the starting page in days, too afraid of the headlines. The doctors are bound to secrecy, yes, but Ilya knows Shane's absence from practice has caused some questions because Hayden fucking Pike has texted him thirty times in the past 36 hours, and he's sure as shit not one of Shane's emergency contacts.

The drive to the hospital is the longest trip Ilya's ever been on, and he's flown from Los Angeles to Russia direct. But more haunting than the drive, more haunting than the empty cottage, more haunting even than the sight of Shane sprawled on that bed is what Ilya encounters when he stops outside Shane's hospital room.

He's *screaming*. Begging. His voice is hoarse like he's been at it for hours. *Days*, Ilya's mind corrects. *He's been in here for days*.

"PLEASE! I DIDN'T DO IT! I SWEAR. LET ME GO! I'M NOT SUICIDAL! I DIDN'T HURT MYSELF! PLEASE, WHY WON'T YOU BELIEVE ME?" Shane's voice cracks on the last sentence. Ilya's heart drops into his stomach. He walks towards the room with purpose, tugging the door open violently.

Their eyes meet.

Shane breaks. "Ilya," he sobs, "Oh, god, Ilya."

Ilya nearly tears the nurses' hands off of Shane, cradling his head as he falls apart quietly, sobbing into his hospital gown. He presses kisses to Shane's collarbone, then his neck, then his lips, as Shane turns his head to meet Ilya in a salty embrace.

"I'm taking him home." Ilya growls. It's the first thing he's said since leaving the hospital that first night.

"Mr. Rozanov," someone starts, "we cannot advise that. Mr. Hollander is having a severe mental health episode. He is denying having taken the pills of his own volition. It is my professional assessment that he should remain here for the time be—"

"No." Shane had gone completely rigid in his arms, relaxing as Ilya ignored the doctor's advice. That was all the information he needed. If Shane was going to recover, he was going to need somewhere where he was comfortable, and that clearly wasn't here.

Ilya watches as the nurses help Shane into the change of clothes he brought as both of them fight back tears. Shane shuts down on the car ride home, agonizingly silent, but Ilya knows that it's not the place to have the discussion they clearly need to. Instead, he keeps a hand on Shane's thigh, a grounding technique for both of them.

When Ilya pulls up to the cottage, Shane starts fighting.

"No, no no no no," he cries out, "Ilya, please, my parents' house, please. It's not safe here, it's not—"

"I...I do not have key." Ilya reminds him. "Yuna and David are on plane. We go there tomorrow, okay?"

“I have the door code. Please, fuck, please. Anywhere but here.” Shane grips his hand tight enough to cut off the circulation.

Ilya turns the car around, still holding Shane’s hand as he falls asleep in the passenger seat.

—

SHANE

When Shane comes to, he’s being carried. There is an initial moment of panic, a millisecond where he thinks he might still be in that godforsaken hospital with the scratchy gowns and the too-bright lights and the doctors that wouldn’t fucking listen to him, but Ilya shushes him as he stirs and he knows he’s safe. Home.

When they reach the door, though, Ilya regretfully has to wake him up to ask for the door code.

“Любимый, what is door code?” Ilya’s voice sounds like he’s been crying. Shane feels sick.

“0591,” Shane breathes out. Ilya punches it in sloppily, still holding Shane, but he manages, and they move into the living room where Ilya deposits Shane on the couch, crawling over him. He curls up behind Shane, holding tightly to his midsection, face plastered to his shoulder. He’s shaking.

Shane lies there for a moment, letting Ilya hold him like the world is ending—because for Ilya, it almost did.

“Ilya,” Shane murmurs hoarsely. His throat still hurts, raw from charcoal and screaming and vomiting. He shifts just enough to turn his head, enough to press his lips into Ilya’s hair.

“Hey. I’m here. I’m okay. I’ve got you.”

Ilya makes a sound that isn’t human. His arms tighten around Shane’s waist like he’s terrified Shane might dissolve if he loosens his grip even a fraction.

“I thought you were dead,” Ilya whispers into Shane’s shoulder. His accent is thicker than usual, Russian bleeding through the cracks. “I thought I came home and you were... you were gone. I cannot— I cannot do that again.”

“I know,” Shane says, eyes burning. “I know. I’m so sorry. God, I’m so sorry.”

The apology makes Ilya freeze.

“No,” Ilya says immediately, harsh and desperate. “No. Do not. Do not say that like this is your fault.”

Shane swallows. His hands shake as he reaches down, finding Ilya’s wrist and holding it, anchoring both of them.

“I have to explain,” he says quietly. “Please. I need you to know what happened. Because I didn’t—” His voice breaks. “I can’t—”

“Tell me,” Ilya says.

Shane takes a shuddering breath.

“There was a man.”

Ilya stiffens instantly.

“That night. After you left. He came up behind me,” Shane continues. “I thought it was you. It wasn’t.” His hands shake where they’re twisted in Ilya’s shirt. “He had a gun. Right away. He didn’t even yell. He just...put it to my head. Told me to—told me to—” Shane heaves out a sob.

Ilya makes a low, broken sound in his chest.

“He told me if I didn’t cooperate, he’d pull the trigger,” Shane says quietly. “If I didn’t take the pills. That you’d come home to me with a hole in my head instead.” His voice cracks. “I knew the pills would hurt you more. You would never stop wondering why I wasn’t happy enough. Why your love wasn’t enough.”

Ilya’s arms tighten painfully around him.

“He made me get them from the cabinet,” Shane whispers. “And he told me to choose.”

Silence presses in on them, thick and suffocating.

“But Ilya, fuck, I knew a gunshot meant no chance,” Shane says. “None. No time. No fighting it. No you.” Tears spill freely now. “But the pills—there was a chance. If you came home in time, you could save me.”

“I took them myself because I couldn’t fucking find another way out,” Shane spits. He digs the heels of his palms into his eyes.

“He—he stood there and watched. Made sure I swallowed, waited long enough that I couldn’t throw them up. I passed out.”

Shane turns around and presses his forehead into Ilya’s chest.

“I’m so sorry,” he cries, “I’m so fucking sorry.”

Ilya rolls them both slightly, until Shane is half turned in his arms. His face is wrecked—eyes red, skin ashen, tears streaming freely.

“They told me you were lying. That you were in denial.”

“I know,” Shane sobs. “I know. They wouldn’t listen. I kept telling them. I kept telling them I didn’t do it. That someone hurt me. They thought it was paranoia. Or shame. Or a psychotic break.” His fingers clutch at Ilya’s sleeve. “I was so scared you’d believe them.”

Ilya presses his forehead to Shane’s, shaking.

“I would never believe anyone more than I believe you.”

Shane breaks completely at that, crying into Ilya’s chest, shoulders heaving. Ilya holds him like he’s afraid the world might try to steal him away again.

“I’m sorry,” Shane gasps. “I’m sorry you found me like that. I’m sorry I scared you. I’m sorry I couldn’t protect myself. I’m sorry—”

“Stop,” Ilya says fiercely, cupping Shane’s face with trembling hands. “You apologize for nothing. Nothing.” His thumbs brush under Shane’s eyes, wiping tears he can’t stop. “You survived. That is all that matters.”

Shane leans into the touch, exhausted beyond words.

“I hate that you went through that,” he whispers. “I hate that you thought I left you.”

Ilya’s lips press into Shane’s hair again and again, like he’s grounding himself through the contact.

“I was so angry,” Ilya admits quietly. “That you would do that, that way—I told you how she died. And then I—fuck. I hated myself for it.” His voice cracks. “I drank. I shut everyone out. I am empty without you.”

Shane pulls back just enough to look at him.

“I will never leave you by choice,” Shane says firmly, even through the tears.

Ilya lets out a shaky breath.

“I will destroy him,” he says, voice calm in a way that is terrifying. “This man. He will never come near you again. I swear it.”

Shane nods. He believes him.

“Ilya?” Shane murmurs after a while. “Can we stay right here?” He asks softly. “Just for tonight.”

Ilya tightens his arms around him.

“Of course.”

—

Neither of them can sleep.

“Shane,” Ilya says quietly, “did you recognize him?”

Shane shakes his head immediately. “No. I never saw his face. He kept the hood up the whole time.”

“Tell me everything you noticed,” Ilya says. “Even if it feels small.”

Shane swallows.

“He was tall,” he says slowly. “Broad. Not athletic, but strong enough that I didn’t think I could fight him.” He exhales shakily.

Ilya nods, encouraging him to keep going.

“He smelled like cigarettes,” Shane continues. “Didn’t speak English well.”

Ilya’s jaw tightens almost imperceptibly.

“He knew your name,” Shane says. “And he knew about your injury. He said it was ‘convenient.’” Shane’s hands twist in Ilya’s shirt. “He didn’t know where the pills were. He made me get them.”

That detail lands.

Ilya closes his eyes.

Shane notices immediately. “Ilya?”

“It seemed like he preferred that you take the pills? That was what he wanted. Not just you dead.”

Shane nods, throat tight. “Yes.”

“The pills made it look like you decided,” Ilya continues. “Like you were the one who did.”

Shane’s breath stutters. “Yes.”

Ilya opens his eyes.

“There is only one person who would do this way,” he says quietly. “Only one other person who knows how my mother died. How to use to hurt me.”

Shane’s stomach drops.

“Alexei.”

—

FOUR DAYS LATER

The hospital is discreet. There is no PR scandal to contain.

Yuna and David are hard to convince. They think Shane should go for another evaluation, but it’s hard to refute the evidence that Ilya begins to find around the cottage.

Hair that does not belong to him or Shane.

Subtle bootprints in the rug in the tread of his brother’s favorite brand.

A police report is filed.

Sixteen days later, Alexei Rozanov is arrested and given a life sentence for attempted murder in the first degree.

Ilya holds Shane tighter that night.

“Спи, моя любовь. Ты в безопасности. Я никогда не позволю никому причинить тебе вред,” he whispers into his hair.

Sleep, my love. You're safe. I will never let anyone hurt you.

End Notes

thank you for reading! feel free to leave a comment if you enjoyed <3

for those of you who may be curious, any untranslated Russian is either an endearment/pet name or a yes/no.

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