

talk me down

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talk me down

by [PennedByLynn](#)

Summary

“No, my parents—” Shane cuts himself off, darting his eyes away from the road to meet Ilya’s. “They know about you.”

“Yes,” says Ilya, dragging the single syllable and nodding just as slowly. Though Shane’s returned his attention to the highway, he can feel Ilya’s confused stare. “I was in Hollander house, drinking David’s nice vodka and eating Yuna’s good pasta. She is much better cook than you, surely you know this. But yes, I was there, they know I am your boyfriend.”

“Ilya, no, well, I mean yes, but—”

“I am supposed to be one bad with English,” mutters Ilya.

“Are my parents the first people to know you aren’t straight?”

Or, on the car ride home, Shane realizes he isn't the only one who got caught today.

Notes

I got very, very drunk celebrating my birthday and I woke up the next morning, hungover, and wrote 1k of this before I even made it downstairs for coffee. That's how serious this idea was when it hit me. We are so fucking back.

Still haven't picked up the books yet, so I have no idea if this is ever brought up, but it just kind hit me what a huge fucking deal it is for Ilya to get caught. To have his career, his visa status, hell, potentially his fucking LIFE be put at risk, and not once does he make that scene about him. He's just steady and he's there for Shane and all he cares about is helping Shane through it and like!!!! Fuck, I love that guy.

But anyways I just kinda thought that if Shane were to realize that, he'd be pretty upset, you know? Like the whole day was about him but it wasn't something that only happened TO him??? So I let him spiral about it a little.

Orion, a million thank you's: for fucking up your sleep schedule to beta this last night and then dealing with me adding another 1200 words today, for giving the fic a title, for being the perfect sounding board, for writing literal paragraphs when I was like gee I think something's missing here idk!!! I'm sorry I have nothing to offer but lowkey maybe your suffering is what you get for ruining my life with hollanov

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

How is it possible for a place so familiar to feel brand new?

Shane has every bump and pothole on this drive memorized. He knows where the trees cluster and spread out along the highway, where the shoulder widens, and where the snow piles up in the winter. He has driven from his parents' back to the cottage hundreds of times before but here, with Ilya, it's like the resolution has been cranked up, the entire world shifting into high definition.

Despite the radio, the first few minutes of the drive are spent in companionable silence. Shane's still decompressing – he feels like he's lived a thousand lives today – and while he usually needs to do that alone in a dark room, that's not the case right now. Now, he is perfectly content to let his brain quiet down with Ilya by his side, the two of them bathed in sunshine.

Ilya looks at him for a long while. He can feel it, even while his eyes remain steadfast on the pavement. Reaches his right hand towards Ilya, who grabs it almost gleefully. He's in awe of all of it: how right it feels, how light it feels.

Does it fucking kill you too?

Not anymore.

And it really doesn't. For so long, his love for Ilya meant pain. It was the ache in his chest, unwanted and cruel, making him wish for things he could never have. But now Ilya's here, in his passenger seat, driving with him from one of Shane's safest spaces to the other, and pain is the furthest thing from his mind.

Now, all he feels is the weight off his shoulders. Feels like the block in his lungs he'd just kinda gotten used to, the breath he'd been holding his entire life, has finally lifted.

The earlier terror and panic have faded. *His worst nightmare*, he remembers calling it. Wonders briefly if it's a little pathetic to have his objectively loving and supportive parents

finding out he's gay as his worst nightmare when the world is so fucked, but it's true. Feeling out of control is hard for Shane, always has been.

So it's pretty surreal to know that despite this not having gone the way he planned or, fuck, even how he wanted, everything's okay. He just left his parents' house with his boyfriend, just sat at the table of the cottage he grew up in, having dinner with his boyfriend and his parents. With *Ilya*.

Ilya, who hugged Shane's mom on the way out and thanked her for the food, who smiled so brightly when Shane's dad promised to have more of that vodka for the next time they visit.

There's no pain in his chest, just a warm, fuzzy feeling he doesn't quite know how to describe yet. It's different from his usual post-win high, but that's the closest he can get. This isn't really his schtick anyways, trying to decipher and name emotions, but maybe this isn't too far off. Sure feels like a fucking victory.

He snakes his hand out of Ilya's clutches, reaching up to cradle the back of Ilya's neck, brushing the curls that lie there. The man leans into Shane's touch, head turning occasionally to glance at the scenery before turning back to look at Shane, who can't help but stare back. Road safety is very important and he should not be driving distracted, he knows he shouldn't, but maybe he can't help it when the man he loves is smiling at him like that.

"Meeting parents went very well, I think." The grin on Ilya changes his whole face, such a transformation from the guarded, arrogant kid he met smoking outside. "Old movie is total lie. Or maybe Ben Stiller is just an idiot."

Shane laughs, unexpected and delighted. "You've seen *Meet the Parents*?"

"We spend a lot of time in planes, I get bored."

"No, no, wait a minute. You've seen *Meet the Parents* and *that's* how you thought today was going to go? And you still came anyway?"

Just as Shane's lowering his hand, Ilya raises his, like he's been waiting on his turn to return the favor. Shane takes a steady breath through his nose, any lingering anxiety melting away as Ilya's fingers scrape through his hair. Ilya's staring again and the grin from earlier has evolved into something more serious, determined. "You asked me to come."

Just like that. As if it's easy.

The radio, whose static increases the further they drive from the city, fills the car again. It will reach a point, in a few minutes, where Shane gets frustrated enough to turn it off, but it's pleasant enough for now. He finds himself ignoring all the usual markers of the drive home, focusing instead on Ilya's questions.

"You see them often? When you are home for summer?"

"Yeah, most days. I feel kind of bad. They always want to travel, go on vacation like we used to when I was in school, but I don't know. I'm on the road so much and when I finally have time off, the last place I want to spend that time is in airports or hotel rooms. I just want to settle. Plant roots, even if they'll get dug up in a few weeks."

Ilya's brow furrows. "You did not show me garden."

"No, not real roots." Shane chuckles, breathy and fond. "Metaphorical roots. Means I just want to stay in one place long enough to unwind."

"Stupid English. Is not even nice metaphor, so dull," grumbles Ilya.

Shane rolls his eyes. "Yeah, yeah boring me and boring English."

"You are boring, yes, but English is dumb. Russian is so much more expressive. You would lose your mind."

“Oh yeah? Is that right?” challenges Shane.

To prove his point, Ilya starts speaking in Russian before leaning down to kiss Shane’s hand.

“Come on, that’s not fair! I don’t even know what you’re saying!”

Ilya pouts, then grins. “Sucks for you.”

“English has some beautiful phrases too, okay?”

“Like what?”

Everything Shane’s ever loved about the language immediately flees his head. And, okay, it’s not like he’s the most expressive guy. He does not have favorite quotes or sonnets; he can barely remember the lyrics to his favorite songs. But he knows he’s heard phrases that made him understand why people like saying all that flowery shit, he’s sure of it.

“Exactly,” says Ilya, triumphant. “Is okay, you don’t know better. I will go easy on you.”

Shane rolls his eyes and reaches over, grabbing Ilya by the jaw, shaking it and faking a scream. “You didn’t give me a chance! I need a minute!”

“Time will not help with stupid language but take, take. Prove me wrong.”

It’s during this time, while they’re cruising down the highway and Shane’s trying to think of a single English phrase that’s pretty enough to express what he’s feeling to Ilya, that he realizes.

“My parents know about you.”

Ilya scoffs, “Hollander, this is all you can come up with? Bah! Dull, stupid language. Russian is *much* better, you will see—”

“No, no, forget about *that*, they know—”

Ilya smiles lazily, his eyes twinkling like he knew what Shane meant all along, thumb brushing over Shane’s right hand. “Yes. Is nice.”

“No, my parents—” Shane cuts himself off, darting his eyes away from the road to meet Ilya’s. “They know about *you*.”

“Yes,” says Ilya, dragging the single syllable and nodding just as slowly. Though Shane’s returned his attention to the highway, he can feel Ilya’s confused stare. “I was in Hollander house, drinking David’s nice vodka and eating Yuna’s good pasta. She is much better cook than you, surely you know this. But yes, I was there, they know I am your boyfriend.”

Shane huffs a frustrated breath through his nose but feels a smile creep up unbidden, nonetheless. When he’s through with this conversation, he’s going to want to appreciate Ilya being so open and gentle, and he’s definitely going to want to formulate a comeback to the cooking comment but, for now, there’s something much more important that he’s failing to convey.

“Ilya, no, well, I mean yes, but—”

“I am supposed to be one bad with English,” mutters Ilya.

“Are my parents the first people to know you aren’t straight?”

The soft brushing of Shane’s hand pauses. Shane’s a little pissed at himself for having this realization on the fucking road. He wants to check in, gauge how Ilya’s really doing.

Sometimes, Shane feels like he only ever really knows in the first 0.75 seconds after he catches Ilya off-guard, before the man realizes what his face is doing and regains control. It's the only insight Shane has in certain situations, when Ilya either can't or won't say what he thinks. It's kind of killing Shane not to know.

"Svetlana knows." Ilya answers quietly. When Shane risks another sideways glance, Ilya's gaze is locked on their hands, still clasped, still steady.

"Are my parents the first people you haven't slept with to know you aren't straight?"

"Mmmm. Yes. Yes, they are first."

"Are you okay? Fuck, I can't believe I didn't even—" Shane cuts himself off again, shaking his head. Squeezes the hand in his like a lifeline. "I'm sorry, I didn't even ask how you were doing. I was freaking out and in my own head about it and, and I just asked you to come with me to my parents house, people you don't even fucking know, to reveal this huge fucking secret when Russia is, well, still Russia and you don't have Canadian citizenship yet and—"

"Shane. Shane, stop. Just breathe, is not. I would not have said no. Is big deal for your parents to know your secret before you were ready for them to. Is bigger deal than them knowing captain of team they hate is also not straight. Is okay for you to freak out."

"I just didn't even think about what I was asking you to do. I was so selfish. I just wanted you there with me, you know? Needed you, actually. I don't think I could have gotten through that without you."

Ilya picks up their hands, brushing a kiss to the back of Shane's. "You could have. You are brave, Shane Hollander."

"It was better though, with you." Shane glances over, a soft smile spreading over his face. How'd he get this lucky? "If it had to go down that way, if they had to find out before I told them, I'm glad you were by my side when it happened."

“You are not mad?”

“Mad that I gave my parents a spare key? Kind of! We’ll be having a serious conversation about privacy and what’s appropriate to—”

“Mad at me.” The words are harsh, scraped from Ilya’s throat. “You are not mad at me? If I don’t come to cottage, maybe parents not know for years.”

Shane’s going to drive this car off the fucking road. He’s never hated the Jeep so much.

“Ilya, no. Oh my god, no. Can we just—” Blissfully, the off-ramp appears and Shane swerves towards it with uncharacteristic speed. “We’ll be home in ten minutes and we can have an actual conversation about this where I’m not focused on keeping us on the road but I’m not mad at you, Ilya. For any of this. It’s not your fault and I’m so sorry if there’s any part of you that thought that was even possible, even for two seconds.”

They pull up to a light and Shane looks over. Ilya’s brow is scrunched, eyes darting back and forth in Shane’s direction. Shane wonders if he’s trying to translate the manic mini monologue he just dumped on the guy unprompted. The expression clears split seconds before the light turns green and Ilya just nods. Squeezes Shane’s hand in lieu of answering.

When the silence drags more than fifteen seconds, Ilya starts tapping his thumb against their hands. When the silence drags more than thirty seconds, Ilya says, “So we just sit in silence for all ten minutes until cottage?”

“Nine now, technically.”

“So precise. You also know which lights we will hit and which ones we will drive through?”

“Well, no, but it’s the law of averages. I’ve made this drive hundreds of times, so I started timing the segments. On a good day, it’s five minutes from my parents house to the highway, another seven on the highway, and ten minutes from the off-ramp to my driveway. It’s rare

that you hit every light. The average always comes back to ten minutes from the off-ramp to the cottage.”

Ilya shakes his head, muttering something under his breath in Russian before replying, “Your life is so boring without me here.”

The breath punches from Shane’s chest. “Yeah, yeah I guess it was.”

Ilya shrugs. “Ten minutes is not so long. I can think of other ways to pass time. You do not need to count boring seconds on boring drive.”

“It’s not a *boring* drive, I’m just saying when you do something often enough, it becomes routine and—“

Ilya pulls his hand away and for a single, horrifying moment, Shane thinks this is it. It’s sunk in, what he’s done, what he forced Ilya into today. Thinks the weight of it all is falling on Ilya, forcing him to realize just how selfish Shane is, how selfish he’s maybe always been. And then Ilya’s hand is grasping his thigh, drawing slow circles where his shorts have ridden up and Shane’s freaking out for a different reason entirely.

“What are you doing?”

“You are so bored and you will not let me talk. We must pass time somehow.”

He’s a menace, the way his fingers drag along Shane’s skin, kicking Shane’s heart rate into overdrive. “Ilya, I’m *driving*.”

“Yes, so you are busy. Not me.” Ilya stays upright in his seat, mimicking an upstanding passenger for all the world to see. If anyone on this secluded backroad could even see through the tinted windows, nothing would be amiss, except for Ilya’s left hand which is slowly creeping up and under Shane’s shorts. “I can do a lot in ten minutes.”

His whole body twitches, causing the steering wheel to jerk, which brings a low chuckle out of Ilya. “You can’t do this!” When Shane’s voice cracks, he tries to turn it into more of a hiss. “I’m going to—We’re going to end up in a ditch and that’s all anyone’s going to remember me as. Forget the rookie stats, forget the fact that I was one of the youngest captains to win the Cup. I’m just going to be the guy who murdered Ilya Rozanov.”

Ilya huffs a wildly dramatic sigh and drags his hand back to his own lap. “Dying would not be so boring as world’s longest silent drive.”

Stubbornly, Shane grabs Ilya’s hand, returning it to the center console. “Five minutes left.”

“You can’t speed a little? Or does Jeep not go over sixty?”

Shane’s eyes narrow but he does press down on the gas. There’s so rarely anyone around, especially police, that it feels worth the risk. Ilya’s not going to last five minutes. Hell, at this rate *Shane’s* not going to last five minutes.

When he risks another glance, he expects to find exasperation written all over Ilya’s face. Instead, there’s just a smug smile, and Shane startles, realizing how this whole thing started, how he was freaking out and needed to talk to Ilya and didn’t know how to drive while having such an important conversation, but also didn’t know how to spend the rest of the drive *not* talking to Ilya because then he’d just be thinking about what he needed to say to him and—

The smirk widens, almost as if Ilya’s glad he’s been caught. Smug fucking bastard.

Ilya’s hand does not stay on the center console. It tries, repeatedly, to make its way back over to Shane’s lap, but it never again drops its grip on Shane’s hand. Ilya pretends to be frustrated and bored out of his mind, but he rubs reassuring circles on Shane’s hand whenever Shane starts tapping on the steering wheel too much. Shane pretends to be annoyed and diligent, but

he stays out of his own head, grateful for the excuse of stupid banter and something inconsequential to complain about.

They make it to the cottage in record time. He's never shaved an entire three minutes off the final leg of that drive before. Wonders briefly when the last time he got an oil change was; the Jeep isn't used to being pushed to such extremes.

"Finally," groans Ilya, the second that the parking brake is applied. He yanks the car door open and unbuckles his seatbelt, but when he tries to extract his left hand, Shane tugs him back.

"Hey. Thank you, seriously." Shane stares into Ilya's eyes for a long moment, the way he hadn't been able to while driving, the way he hadn't been able to during the first few years of them discovering each other.

"Yes, I save us from dying of both boredom and ditch. You are welcome." His words and tone are classic Ilya but his expression softens, as if, for once, he's acknowledging the effort he puts in.

Shane is so stupidly in love with this guy. He can't believe how long he spent denying it.

They kiss, sweet and slow, and while their foreheads are still pressed together, Ilya mutters, "Please, finally, we can leave boring Jeep now?"

Shane shoves his chest in response but they do, finally, leave the Jeep. There's a lump in Shane's throat as he watches Ilya bound up the stairs and linger in the doorway. Thinks it was worth staying up until 3 AM to formulate a way to watch that sight for the rest of his life.

Once the door's unlocked and their shoes are off and they're settled on the couch, Shane clears his throat.

“Seriously, we do not need to do this. I am good.” Ilya’s hand finds Shane’s thigh again, but just to squeeze, not to wander. It’s grounding, almost. “You worry too much. Is stressful for you, with parents, I know, but for me, is very nice day.”

“So you’re okay with two complete strangers knowing this massive secret of yours? You’re okay with them having the power to potentially destroy your career and reputation and your visa status and send you back to Russia, outed?”

Ilya looks at Shane intently, searching. “You trust them, yes?”

“Of course I do.”

“And I trust you so...” Ilya gestures with his free hand between them. “Hollanders all one big happy trustworthy family. We are okay. You do not need to worry.”

Something breaks inside Shane’s chest, some layer of ice he didn’t even know existed causing his eyes to prick as it thaws. Tries to remember the last time his word was enough for someone, the last time he felt *he* was enough. Shane prides himself on having an incredible memory, but he’s coming up short here.

He thinks about everything that’s happened this week, the way his entire life has changed, how he can suddenly see a future beyond the end of his hockey career. He thinks about Ilya and how the man next to him used to run away anytime Shane dared to show a bit too much affection, about the countless texts that Shane has typed and then deleted in fear of revealing even more.

Shane knew the cottage would change their relationship. It’s the reason he invited Ilya in the first place. Traces the whole thing back to that day in Boston with the first names and the tuna melts and that ice cold ginger ale. And, well, Shane’s used to working for what he wants; he’s not used to being offered it.

So yes, Shane knew two uninterrupted weeks would change their relationship but he never could have imagined this. Shane never could have imagined the way Ilya would unfurl, the

affection that would pour out of him the moment he was allowed. Shane's going to go to his grave kicking himself for walking out, for ever making Ilya think he wasn't allowed.

"Hey, hey don't cry." Ilya's voice and hands pull Shane out of his own head, fingers tracing along his jawline and brushing through his hair.

Shane's mouth pinches. "I'm not." He knows he's not crying, because he's working very hard not to. His face is still dry so he knows it's working, for now at least. And it's better this way. He's been exposed like a raw nerve countless times today; it's better for both of them if he can keep it together now.

"I'm trying to say nice thing. Is coming out wrong?"

Shane just shakes his head, snaking his arm around Ilya's shoulders, finding his way into the curls he loves so much. "It's not. It's not coming out wrong at all." He takes an unsteady breath. "You really don't mind?"

"They were always going to know, yes? You make me listen to very long plan about Ottawa and charity and retirement. You would tell them somewhere in there? Or you were planning on keeping me secret sex object until we die?"

"Asshole," grumbles Shane. Ilya nips at his chest in response, all teeth like a puppy. "Of course I was planning on telling them. Whenever we were both okay with it, I was planning on telling them. I was going to ask you, when the time was right."

"I am okay with it now. If you asked me this morning, can you tell David and Yuna about sexy Russian hockey player boyfriend, answer would be yes. You want to ask anyway? I can pretend."

It's a joke, but there's truth underneath, much like everything Ilya says. Shane knows Ilya can pretend, sees the evidence more and more, but he can also see Ilya is tired of pretending. Inexplicably, it reminds Shane of the other topic that came up in the car, the entire reason he nearly drove off the highway in the first place.

“You know I’m not mad at you, right?”

“What?”

Shane sighs, remembering that though Ilya is perceptive, he’s apparently not an actual mindreader. “On the drive here, you asked if I was mad at you, like you thought it was your fault my dad caught us.”

Silence, thick but not uncomfortable, settles over the living room. For a while, the only confirmation Shane has that Ilya’s heard him is the patterns Ilya continues to draw on his chest. “It is,” he finally murmurs. Shane fights the urge to pull his boyfriend’s face up but knows how Ilya is, knows it will be easier for him to truly speak if he doesn’t think Shane can see him. “It is my fault. I don’t come to cottage, you are not exposed. I ruin chance for you to decide when to tell secret.”

This time, the tears do fall. Tear, more specifically, but still. It hits Shane then, the weight that Ilya carries but never once shows, how he spent the whole day checking in and calming Shane down, walking into the most uncomfortable possible introduction with Shane’s parents, talking Shane down from two panic attacks and cracking jokes with Shane’s parents.

Shane Shane Shane.

Who takes care of Ilya?

This whole day Ilya spent as the perfect boyfriend—god, Shane’s never going to get tired of saying that; his fucking boyfriend, he never thought he’d get one—focusing on making everyone else comfortable while secretly worried Shane was mad at him, like he doesn’t even know how much Shane appreciates him. Maybe he doesn’t. Shane couldn’t possibly feel any smaller.

“You didn’t ruin anything. They were always going to know at some point, right? Like you said. I think it’s better that they know now, actually. Easier. I mean I’ll absolutely have to talk

my mom into holding off on the Rolex pride campaign when they get here but, I actually think it's a good thing."

Slowly, Ilya peels himself off Shane's chest to stare at his face, his eyes tracking the singular, drying tear track. "You are sure?"

"I thought you trusted me."

"You are bad at communicating, I must make sure."

"Me?!" asks Shane, aghast.

"Yes, you. It takes mention of marriage to Svetlana to tell me how you feel. I tell you months ago."

"What do you mean you told me—" Shane's eyes are going to bulge out of his skull. "In *Russian*?! Is that what you're talking about, the phone call?"

"Yes, I am excellent communicator. I tell you everything and is so much prettier than stupid English. Is not my fault you cannot understand."

"Oh my fucking—" Shane cuts himself off at the sight of Ilya's grin, the familiar territory of their banter lifting the heaviness of the conversation. "That's it, I'm downloading Duolingo."

Ilya, bewildered, asks, "You are what?"

"I'm going to let that terrifying owl teach me how to speak Russian so you can't use that excuse anymore."

“What is with you and these fucking birds? No, I teach.”

“You’re going to teach me an entire language?”

“Mmm, no. Just useful phrases.” Ilya’s entire face transforms before he speaks in Russian, practically growling.

Shane gulps. “What does that mean?”

“Take off your clothes.”

And, well, Shane’s always been very good at doing what he’s told.

End Notes

HAPPY HOLLANOV NEW YEAR!!!!!!!

I cannot wait to read the books and become even more batshit insane over them.

My tumblr, much like my ao3, is slowly being resurrected if you'd like to scream about heated rivalry: brizzlovesyou.

Thanks for reading!!!!

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