

when the sun came up, i was looking at you

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when the sun came up, i was looking at you

by [justhockey](#)

Summary

It feels like he's holding the entire world inside his heart.

Ilya loves him so much. An impossible, unbelievable amount. It swells inside of him, warm and cozy, like a little pocket of sunlight lodged beneath his ribs.

This love is the most gentle thing Ilya has ever known, and he can't believe he gets to keep it.

(Or, a perfect afternoon at the cottage.)

Notes

Title from *Out of the Woods* by Taylor Swift.

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

Ilya's skin is still pink from the game of sewer ball they just played, and he feels all soft and malleable, the way he always does when he's around Shane.

There's a lightness to Ilya here, at the cottage, as if his bones weigh less without all the cameras and eyes and expectations being shoved upon him. Like here, he gets to just *be*. They *both* get to just be. Because there's no pretence or performance here, just Ilya and Shane and all of the love that they can finally put into words.

Especially now that Yuna and David know - now that Shane gets to share one of the biggest parts of himself with someone other than Ilya. It makes them feel real, solid, like they're not just an idea or a dream anymore, but something tangible.

Something that is allowed to live and breathe and *last*.

After a phone call with his agent - Boston is already wanting to start negotiations about his next contract, but Ilya is doing his best to stall them - he moves through the cottage in search of his boyfriend.

Ilya grins when he finally rests his eyes on Shane through the window. He's outside, lying on his back in the patch of grass they'd just been playing sewer ball on. His hands are folded beneath his head, and his legs are crossed at the ankles, and he looks like he's just taking in the world around him.

Naturally, it's Ilya's job to disturb his peace.

He slips through the half open sliding doors and walks towards him, careful not to make a sound. He's centimetres away from Shane, ready to yell or pounce on him or *something*, when Ilya sees Shane's mouth twist into a smirk.

"I know you're there," he says, all smug and self-satisfied.

"Freaky bird ears," Ilya scoffs.

Shane opens a single eye, squinting up at Ilya through the sun. He looks lovely like this, with his sweat-damp t-shirt riding up enough to show a sliver of his bare stomach, and his thick hockey thighs stretching out a pair of shorts. It's impossible not to think of the way the skin there turns pink when Ilya bites it.

"*Bird ears?*" Shane asks, sounding confused.

Ilya rolls his eyes and nods as he lowers himself to the ground beside Shane.

"Yes. Those birds with the good ears?"

Shane frowns for a moment, but then it suddenly gives way to a loud, raucous laugh. The sound makes something tighten in Ilya's chest. Shane opens his other eye as he props himself up on his elbows, turning his head so he can look at Ilya.

“Do you mean *bat* ears?”

Ilya scoffs again, waving his hand about dismissively. “Bird, bat, same thing.”

Shane snorts. “Okay, Ilya. Whatever you say.”

A peaceful quiet settles over them for a while. Shane lies back down and Ilya leans backwards on his hands, tilting his face up towards the sun. There’s the sound of water gently lapping against the shoreline, and the birdsong in the trees that surround them, and it feels as close to perfect as Ilya has ever known.

It’s the kind of day he could have only dreamed of, once upon a time. A day where everything is good, and easy, and he gets to spend it with someone who he loves and who loves him right back.

He turns his head to look at Shane.

His eyes are still closed, and there’s the ghost of a smile still etched upon his lips, and suddenly Ilya feels like he’s being transported back to a freezing cold alleyway in Saskatchewan, circa 2008. Because Shane looks so young like this, without the stress of a team, and a province, and a country bearing down on him. He looks like the boy with the freckles who captured Ilya’s heart and never let it go.

Ilya feels so overwhelmed with love for Shane that he doesn’t know what to do with it. It’s like it doesn’t all fit inside of him; there’s too much and it’s spilling out over the edges, impossible to ignore. It hums inside of him like a living thing - has its own heartbeat that only knows how to thrum in the rhythm of Shane’s name.

He wants to crawl inside of Shane, sometimes. Wants to burrow beneath his skin and muscle and bone, carving out a spot for himself right beside Shane’s heart. He worries even that wouldn’t be close enough.

He hopes he’s this desperately, achingly in love for the rest of his life.

He tips onto his side, lowering himself down until he can press a kiss to Shane’s temple. Shane hums, his face turning into the kiss like a compass searching for true north. And Ilya can’t help but touch him, resting a hand on his stomach first, then trailing it up to his chest, his healed collarbone, the perfect curve of his jaw.

Ilya runs his nose along the exposed length of Shane’s neck, breathing him in deeply. His skin smells like sunshine and freshly cut grass, and Ilya kind of wants to bite him.

“You smell good.”

Shane snorts and tries to push Ilya’s head away. “I smell like sweat,” Shane corrects him.

Ilya just groans.

“Fuck, that’s hot,” he says.

Shane laughs, loud and carefree. “You’re an animal.”

In an instant Ilya is rolling on top of him, straddling Shane’s hips as he rests his hands on either side of his head. He grumbles, little *nom nom nom* sounds, as he pretends to bite Shane’s face and neck. Shane giggles while Ilya hovers above him, taking in the masterpiece laid out beneath him as Shane’s hands come to rest on Ilya’s waist.

He looks beautiful like this; something out of a too-good-to-be-true dream. Otherworldly and divine, like something you’d see on the stained-glass of a cathedral. Holy and worthy of worship. His skin is sun kissed, and his freckles are more pronounced, and his eyes are bright and sparkling as he looks up at Ilya.

It feels like he’s holding the entire world inside his heart.

Ilya loves him so much. An impossible, unbelievable amount. It swells inside of him, warm and cozy, like a little pocket of sunlight lodged beneath his ribs.

This love is the most gentle thing Ilya has ever known, and he can’t believe he gets to keep it.

He swoops down and steals a kiss from Shane’s lips, but it doesn’t feel like enough - nothing *ever* feels like enough when it comes to Shane. So he kisses him again, first on his lips, and then his chin, and his cheek, and his jaw, and his nose. He traces Shane’s freckles with his lips. He presses kiss after kiss onto every sliver of exposed skin that he can find, across Shane’s forehead and the shell of his ear, and down the column of his throat.

He kisses him in bursts and flurries that have Shane giggling beneath Ilya, and he wriggles like he’s trying to escape but then his body betrays him with every single kiss, because he keeps leaning into them. Chasing Ilya’s mouth. Silently begging for more of Ilya’s attention and affection and adoration.

It’s an easy thing to give him; sometimes Ilya thinks he might die if he doesn’t get to touch Shane.

It feels like there’s an invisible thread tied between them, never allowing them to stray far from each other. A thread that Ilya always wants to pull tighter, so Shane is never away from him for even a single second. It’s greedy, and maybe a little bit possessive, too, but he just can’t help himself. Shane is *his*. He hates that anyone else has ever touched him - ever even looked at him, honestly - but prides himself on knowing that no one else has ever known this version of Shane.

No one else gets to see him sun-warmed and pliant, relaxed in a way that he almost never allows himself to be.

“Ilya, I need a shower,” Shane complains, even though he’s still laughing.

“No,” Ilya refuses. “I’m not done with you yet.”

“Ilya...”

His denial turns into a sigh when Ilya kisses it from his mouth, swallowing down whatever argument he was about to make. He doesn't care that Shane is still sweaty from their game, he just licks a stripe along the side of Shane's neck and savours the salty-sweet flavour of his skin.

He wants to swallow him whole.

Ilya kisses Shane's flickering pulse point, trails his lips down his throat and pulls at the neck of his t-shirt to kiss his collarbone - the place where it broke, and then where it healed even stronger.

He slithers down Shane's body, bites at his chest through the fabric, then pushes the hem up so he can kiss and suck and nibble at the softness of his stomach. He dips his tongue into Shane's bellybutton; Shane half groans, half laughs at the sensation, but he doesn't fight Ilya on it. He doesn't tell him to stop or complain that he's sweaty, he just blushes at the attention and tugs gently at Ilya's curls.

It's gorgeous, the way Shane melts for him. The way he lets go of everything, even his own mind, because he knows that Ilya will take care of him. In the bedroom only, at first. But in softer moments now, too, like when he's having a panic attack in front of his parents or simply on a sunny day lying in the grass.

His unflinching trust is a miraculous thing.

Ilya pushes down the waistband of his shorts by an inch or so, sucking a hickey onto his skin in the crease between his hip and thigh. He's allowed to do that here. No one is going to see it or ask questions. He can leave his mark behind on Shane's skin, deep reds and pinks purples, like he's painting a canvas with watercolours.

They could fuck out here, like they did the other day out on the dock. It's private enough that no one could catch them.

But that's not what Ilya wants, right now. He just wants to touch Shane, to kiss him, to love on him in the way he deserves - the way they both denied themselves for so many years. It's not about sex at the moment. Later, he'll take Shane apart slowly. He'll bring him to the edge over and over again, until he's whimpering and begging, and crying so beautifully for Ilya.

But for now, Ilya just wants *this*.

"My baby," Ilya murmurs against his skin. "My sweet boy."

Shane whimpers, a soft, muted thing. He's half hard; Ilya can see where he's starting to tent his shorts, but he doesn't move to touch him and Shane doesn't ask him to.

"Ilya," Shane sighs. Not a question, but a declaration. Saying his name simply because he can.

"Shane. My love. Kótik." *Kitten*, for the way Shane has taken to biting and scratching and marking Ilya like he owns him.

(He does.)

He makes his way back up Shane's body slowly; a kiss to his hip, his sternum, the hollow of his throat, that spot beneath his ear that makes him sigh. And then Ilya kisses his mouth, slow and wet and a little bit filthy, too. They swap spit, sucking on each other's tongues and licking each other's teeth like they're trying to devour each other.

It makes Ilya feel a little bit delirious, and his cock twitches where it's pressed against Shane's hip, but he still doesn't want any more than this.

They have time, here. To go slow, to explore, to kiss just for the sake of kissing and hold each other just for the sake of holding each other. This isn't a stolen moment in an anonymous hotel room. It isn't a thing they have to rush. Ilya wants to savour that; he wants to bask in this lazy, sun-warmed moment for as long as the world will allow him to.

It takes a lot to unlearn all of the instincts that have kept Ilya alive - a lot to lower the barbed-wire walls and retract his fangs, in favour of learning how to be soft. It isn't an easy thing to do, when you've spent your whole life polishing your armour instead of peeling it back.

But there's something about Shane that has always brought out the tenderness in Ilya.

Maybe it's the way that he's never expected anything of him - the way Shane has never demanded, or pressured, or asked for anything more than Ilya's honesty...Ilya's *heart*. Or maybe it's just *him*, the quiet goodness of Shane, that makes Ilya want to be good, too. That makes him want to be worthy of such a kindhearted man.

He pulls back a little, just far enough that he can rest his forehead against Shane's and brush their noses together sweetly. Shane grins, and Ilya thinks all of his happiness might be cradled in the curve of Shane's smile.

He pulls back to look at Shane. His boyfriend, his *lover*. He reaches up a hand and maps out constellations in the tiny stars on Shane's cheeks - the freckles that drew Ilya in from the very first moment he saw him. Shane's skin colours the softest pink under his touch, and Ilya can't stop himself from leaning down again, just to kiss the corner of his smile.

"So beautiful," Ilya whispers.

Shane brings his hand up to Ilya's face, holding his chin between his thumb and forefinger and pulling him back down. Ilya thinks he's searching for another kiss, but instead Shane raises his head to press his lips to the mole on Ilya's cheek, then his jaw, then the cupid's bow of his upper lip.

"Perfect," Shane says, his breath warm as it fans across Ilya's skin.

The moment feels fuzzy, hazy, a little bit like old tv static. It takes on something of a dream-like quality, because it's hard to believe this is actually real. That he gets to have Shane here, like this, looking up at Ilya like he's the answer to every question Shane could ever ask.

There's a cluster of white daisies growing in the grass by Shane's head so Ilya stretches out a hand, finds the most perfect one, and plucks it. He brings it up to show Shane, who giggles like it's a dozen red roses instead of a common garden flower. Ilya trails it down the side of Shane's face until he scrunches his nose up because it tickles, and then he carefully tucks it behind his ear.

"I love you," Ilya promises him. The words are familiar on his tongue, now, after days of saying them over and over and over again. They never feel any less precious, though.

Shane smiles, and whispers, "Ya tebya lyublyu."

His accent is almost perfect now, because of course it is. He's Shane fucking Hollander.

Ilya surges back in, so overcome with love and affection and gratitude, and bites gently at the curve of Shane's jaw. Not enough to leave a mark that will last, but enough to leave the impression of his teeth behind for a little while - enough to sting, just a bit, just in a good way.

Shane laughs, soft and bright, and it mixes in with the birdsong. It feels warmer than the sun.

Ilya slides sideways off of Shane before he takes another bite, landing on the grass and rolling onto his back in a mirror of Shane's position. They're not separated for long, though, because Shane quickly follows him, curling into his side like his body was carved to fit against Ilya's. Shane rests his head on his shoulder, brushing his nose against Ilya's flickering pulse. Ilya winds his arm around Shane's back to hold him even closer; he'd merge their bodies into one if he could find a way.

Shane lets his hand rest on Ilya's stomach, tracing lazy patterns against the *Hollander 24* Team Canada t-shirt Ilya is proudly wearing. His own hand joins Shane's, and he tangles their fingers together just because he wants more of Shane to hold.

"Today is a good day," Shane remarks.

Ilya hums in acknowledgment. "Every day with you is good day."

It's the kind of sentiment he would have swallowed down just a couple of months ago - too big and too honest and too real. But he says it freely now, honestly, because it's true and because Shane deserves to hear it.

He deserves to know that he's the best thing that's ever happened to Ilya.

"I have never been so happy."

"You mean it?" Shane asks, and Ilya can hear the smile in his voice.

"Yes. Of course. This is my favourite day ever."

Shane laughs, turns his head so he can kiss the hollow above Ilya's clavicle. Ilya kisses the top of Shane's head in return, because he can't get enough of these simple, easy touches. The kind he used to want so desperately, but was never allowed to reach for.

“Thank you,” Shane says.

“For what?” Ilya asks, because the way he sees it, he’s the one who needs to spend the rest of his life thanking Shane.

“For coming even though you were scared. For loving my parents. For loving *me*.”

“Moya lyubov,” Ilya says, “loving you is the easiest thing I have ever done.”

“Really?”

“Yes, really.”

It’s as easy as breathing, for Ilya. Easier sometimes, even. Shane is the beat in his heart and the oxygen in his lungs, and every single good thing Ilya has experienced since he was twelve years old.

But that’s too much, too heavy for such a beautiful day.

“And that is saying something,” Ilya continues, “because hockey is very easy for me. I am best player in league.”

Shane snorts, slapping their joined hands down onto Ilya’s chest. He buries his face in Ilya’s neck, kissing him softly between his laughter.

“You’re an asshole.”

“Stop, kótik, you’re turning me on,” Ilya teases.

Shane nips at the soft underside of Ilya’s jaw, his teeth sharp enough to leave a mark that will linger. But then he runs his tongue over the skin to soothe it, and kisses it softly. Ilya’s kitten, with his sharp claws and needle-like teeth, and his soft, soft heart.

After a moment Shane untangles their fingers and rolls onto his back, looking up at the clouds in the sky. Their sides are still pressed together and his head is still resting on Ilya’s arm, though, and he reaches up his hand to lock their fingers together once again. He rests them on the grass.

The sun is glorious, today. High in the sky, and hot enough to leave their skin warm to the touch. It bounces off the lake in tiny, refracted rainbows, and shines through the trees leaving speckled shadows along the ground. It’s the most beautiful place Ilya has ever been in Canada. The most beautiful place he’s ever been *anywhere*, probably. The kind of scene that belongs on postcards and calendars and in art galleries.

He turns away from the view and looks at Shane.

End Notes

starting the year as i mean to go on: writing hollanov fics

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