the hunter’s heart, the hunter’s mouth

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by makemegentle

Summary

Teasing: ‘Come on, then, Hollander. Crawl.’
On all fours, like a dog, like a bitch, Shane obeys. I want to be your pet, he thinks, wildly. I want to be your everything. I am an animal and I am yours. Nuzzle me and fuck me and tell me what to do, I don't care. If I am your dog, Ilya, then train me.

Featuring some filth and whole lot of feelings, inspired by the phone call with Hayden in S01E06: Shane realises that he is kinkier than he thought. Luckily, Ilya just so happens to match his freak.

Notes

I have not read the books and thus have but a vague idea of what happens in The Long Game, which accounts for any divergence from canon circa summer 2018. My other excuse is that I wrote this fic pussy-first.

See the end of the work for more notes

It's a week to the Stanley Cup final, an ordinary, boring movie night after both the Bears and the Raiders have been kicked out of the playoffs, Ilya's left arm slung around his shoulders and his fingers absentmindedly tapping against the line of his jaw, that Shane closes his eyes for a moment, sated and warm and relaxed, and never finds peace again.

The movie is Fifty Shades Darker and it's terrible, of course. The plot is laughable (said Shane); the dialogue is stupid (added Ilya); James Dornan, however, is hot (both agree), so they are enduring. Half an hour into the movie, however, Dornan spanks Dakota Johnson a little too hard while she's wearing beads, and all Shane can do is blame Ilya, Ilya being there, being himself and warm and relaxed and his, above all, *his-his-his*, smelling of his stupid Whiskey Reserve 3-in-1 and just a hint of cigarette, because there is no way he's getting worked up over straight sex. There is no fucking way.

He closes his eyes, and the movie fades in the background, and his parents, sleeping in the guest room, do too. The recollection is sudden and technicolor-vivid, a year ago: the cottage, Hayden on the phone, Ilya's head bobbing and his lips, tight, around his cock. The suction, the light caress of teeth, tongue against his slit. Above all, though, Ilya's slapping his cheek. The palm of his hand, warm and calloused, against his skin. Each hit barely a sting, not pain but play, and yet. And yet.

'Shane,' says Ilya.

Shane breathes. In and out. 'Yes?'

'I like my hair.'

Shane is now acutely aware of his own hand, indeed threading through Ilya's hair. He has never been more aware of one of his limbs before. 'So do I.'

'I am glad. I hope we can both enjoy it while it's still on my skull.'

'Uh?'

'Stop pulling.'

'Sorry.'

A pause. Shane opens his eyes. Jamie Dornan is now fucking Dakota Johnson and '*Hollander*,' exhales Ilya, turning around. His eyes are bright and his expression delighted. 'No. Over *this*?'

Ilya's hand leaves his face, thank *God*, fingers trailing down the hollow of his neck, past his pecs, quick twists of his nipples that have him jolt with a sharp inhale. His fingers walk past his tummy, follow his happy trail, finally brushing the hem of his boxers.

'No,' says Shane, desperate. 'Over you. Always,' which is not a lie, and Ilya's smile turns crooked and wicked, just the way he likes, his fingers slipping inside his underwear to curl around his cock, and he thinks no more.

*

It's something that Ilya seems to do it almost unconsciously when he's kissing him, hard and deep and intoxicating. This guiding, tight grip on his jaw. He'll pull back and look into his eyes, hungry and almost feverish and yet so tender, and will slap him into offering his neck or into kneeling. And Shane will always respond to him, puppet to puppeteer.

*

The worst thing is, it really took Fifty Shades of Straight Sex to realise that, really, this is the problem: Ilya never fucks, grabs, or hits him hard enough.

*

On June 23rd, 2018, he googles: *What does it mean if I like to be hit?*

The first result is an article from Psychology Today titled, *How to Define Abuse in Relationships.* Shane slaps the laptop closed so hard that Ilya, who has so far been lost in his Instagram-scrolling alone time with his feet tucked underneath Shane's ass, looks up at him from the other end of the four seater like he's grown antlers. 'Everything OK?'

'Sure,' says Shane, and spirals.

*

Sometimes, despite the years spent in North America and the move from Boston to Ottawa, Shane will still catch Ilya standing in front of his apartment windows, quiet and adrift. He'll be soaring and lost somewhere between the shores of the Atlantic and Большóй теáтр where his mother had trained, or looking up at the hammer and sickle inlays of the Gorky Park portal by the Moskva river where she used to take him, on those rare and bright days in which sadness slid off her like day's old clothes. There was none of it in the the small gap between her front teeth, then, so her mouth was for laughing; no tremor in the palm of her hands as she cup the back of his head, encouraging him to play with other children; no desperation in the back of her throat as called out to him: Солнышко.

'There is a new park now,' Ilya told him a few weeks ago, on one of those straying evenings where no anchor was enough: not Shane's fingers, digging into Ilya's sides, nor their legs intertwined. 'Near the Red Square. Svetlana sent me photos. The bridge looks out on the Kremlin. It will open in August. There is a concert hall, too. She would have loved it.'

Shane asked, 'Are you looking forward to visiting?'

Ilya was quiet for a long time. 'I don't think I'll ever get to see it,' was all he could say in the end.

This, however, is a crisp evening on the cusp of summer, a few degrees below the average, the sky dark and clear behind Montreal's jagged skyline, and Ilya is serving up two plates of *penne alla vodka* with the flair and the enthusiasm of a Michelin star chef. The table is set with one of those special occasions tablecloths they keep in the bottom drawer of his kitchen

cabinet, red paper tissues carefully folded in triangles and golden-coat stainless steel cutlery waiting for them.

‘Please,’ says Ilya, drawing the opposite chair back. He is radiant and he is his. ‘Guests first.’

‘Technically, you’re the guest,’ says Shane, picking up the fork.

‘Just eat, Hollander.’

‘OK.’

‘Actually, wait,’ and Ilya digs his own fork into the three pieces of penne before offering a bite. ‘Open your mouth. Come on, be a good boy.’

Of course he opens his mouth, tongue sticking out, and drags his teeth against the tines of the fork. The pasta is good, al dente, the vodka but an aftertaste in the back of his throat. It’s inebriating, the sweetness of plum tomatoes and the depth of alcohol, and yet all Shane can think of is: *I’ll keep my mouth open, Ilya. Feed it or fuck it, I don’t care, keep me open*, and so —

‘Let me,’ he says, and he slides down the chair. ‘I want to suck your cock.’

‘No, no, it will get cold—’

‘You can keep eating,’ says Shane, frantic, and puts his hands on Ilya’s spread knees. Ilya grabs his chin between his thumb and his index finger, and yes, he is a good boy, he will take it and suck him and swallow him down until he can taste nothing more than his come and smell the musk of the wiry hair of his groin.

Of course, he reasons later, the first step is to acknowledge, and accept, that he may be a freak, which is something he has failed to analyse too closely so far. But there’s many of those around the world, anyway, what’s one more? He hasn’t been a blushing virgin for almost a decade, спасибо, Ilya, and knows, rationally, that he likes to be roughed up a little bit, to be thrown around and manhandled. And what's a bit of manhandling between two men?

The blistering pangs of humiliation that his Russian arch-rival could boss him around the bedroom so easily—that struggle he went through when he was nineteen and laser-focus on besting Ilya at all costs—are long gone. He likes to whimper and beg, to mouth and lick, likes the struggle, the strain, likes his nipples bitten and abused. He enjoys the somersaults in his stomach when Ilya tells him to bend over, or to lie on the bed and spread his asscheeks, the dark look in his eyes and his stride those of a predator’s about to strike.

And Ilya—Ilya likes it too, clearly. He’s not dumb. Any sex they have always dances on the edge of power play.

This, though. This is beyond anything they’ve done so far.

After two Moscow Mules, liquor-fuelled, sated in more ways than one, and with Ilya fast asleep in the bedroom, Shane attempts a slightly more successful string of google searches,

the firsts of which are: *I like being slapped* and *do I like humiliation?*.

The third glass, neat, has him give up any pretence and type *BDSM for beginners*, and holy fuck:

There's chains and ropes and cuffs. There's Dommes and Doms and subs and slaves, there's bondage and shibari, and aren't they the same thing?, and there's spitting and slapping and spanking and belting and chastity devices and ball gags and leashes and cock rings and watersports, which he looks up on some porn site and, quickly realises, do not concern water rides, the same way sounding has anything to do with audio engineers. There's felching and milking and furries, of course there's furries. He's seen pics of them at Pride parades, crawling around in leather costumes, and that's when he chastises himself, no kink shaming. He wants his boyfriend to slap him, so who is he to judge? The only difference between him and them is that he doesn't want a muzzle.

Except, now mollified and loose-limbed, Shane's mind drifts and meanders and roams. They'd be at the cottage, the late summer afternoon light draping Ilya in the same gold of his hair, then in the copper-red hue of maple leaves. Ilya would be sitting back on the sofa, bare-chested and lips bite-pink and glistening as he sips a glass of vodka on the rocks. His boxers would be riding up, revealing the flexing muscles of his thighs.

'Come here,' he would say—no, order—his legs falling open, easy and inviting.

And Shane—Shane—

Shane is stepping out of his boxers, one leg at a time. He folds them nicely, places them on the chaise-longue. Yet, he does not move, standing still and defiant despite his own cock hard and weeping at the tip, because Ilya is holding a leash in his other hand, and if he wants him close, then he'll have to make him.

The collar presses against his jugular and the leather could cut against his skin, if it was any tighter. Would he like it? Would he like the bruising, the reminder of his submission? No, he would hate it. He would hate it and his cock would still be hard, would make him want to bend over and plead, *Please fuck me, make me feel anything else but this. Anything but this shame.*

'I said come here,' Ilya says again. Repeats it in Russian. Stretches his left leg, toes nudging Shane's ankle.

Shane says, 'Make me.'

Ilya does exactly that. Grips the handle of the leash tighter and tugs once, twice, hard enough that Shane stumbles forward, cock bobbing in the air, and drops to his knees in a dull thud, and, 'Yes,' he exhales, the palms of his hands flat on the floor, 'да.'

Teasing: 'Come on, then, Hollander. Crawl.'

On all fours, like a dog, like a bitch, Shane obeys. *I want to be your pet,* he thinks, wildly. *I want to be your everything. I am an animal and I am yours. Nuzzle me and fuck me and tell*

me what to do, I don't care. If I am your dog, Ilya, then train me.

Ilya tugs again, chain rattling. 'Suck my cock,' he says, in a low voice. 'Hump my leg, like a good boy. You can come like that, making a mess on the floor. But you must lick it up afterwards.'

Yes, Master, thinks Shane, and, in the darkness of the living room, he gasps, *fuckfuckfuck*, before coming all over the smooth plane of his belly.

*

(This is what Ilya, in his midnight daze, sees instead: his boyfriend bathed in the glow of his laptop screen, getting off to something, or someone, that isn't him.)

*

The plan of action, formulated during the two hours that Ilya spends down in the home gym and saved on the notes app with a password that includes mom's birthday, his father's place of birth, the date of his first hockey win, and a random combination of numbers, is as follows:

1. More research.
2. Create a spreadsheet and make a list of likes, limits, and maybes.
3. Ask Rose for advice. She's an artist. She must have friends who are into this.
4. Gently broach the argument with Ilya.
5. Present spreadsheet to Ilya.
6. Organise kinky sex in the cottage.
7. Prepare a nice playlist so he doesn't have to hear his own thoughts while the kinky sex is had.
8. Aftercare. It's important.
9. Debrief with Ilya.
10. Repeat 6 - 9 as necessary.

It's two hours into point number 1 and 2, the spreadsheet displaying a handful of interests and a growing number of limits, and the results from bdtsmtest.org taunting him, that it dawns on Shane that Ilya was right all along. He's boring. People are out there being chained to St. Andrew crosses and hung from ceilings from and all he want is for Ilya to fuck his mouth, slap him a little and have missionary sex, because he really, really enjoys looking up at that lovely, dumb, cocky face.

And that *73% vanilla* in bright green, mocking him. God, he thinks, the ball of his fists pressed against his eyelids. He *is* boring. He is both boring and a freak. How is that even possible?

*

After some more research, including but not limited to the erotica section of Kindle Unlimited, a legitimately shameful number of porn sites, and a deep dive into a few BDSM blogs on Tumblr, Shane opens the spreadsheet, moves *cock rings*, *degradation,* and *edging* to

the likes and adds *free use, feminization, lingerie, dubcon, felching* and *forced orgasms* to the maybe column. Hey may not be so boring after all.

*

It could be a great way to celebrate Ilya's contract with the Centaurs.

*

His first attempt at broaching the topic, which coincides with Ilya's second but successful attempt at getting him to eat his penne alla vodka while it's still warm, comes three days later on an uneventful Tuesday and goes like this:

Shane, faux-blasé: 'What did you think of Fifty Shades Darker, then?'

Ilya, smirking: 'I don't know. We fucked. I was distracted. You seemed distracted also.'

Shane, lying: 'It wasn't too bad, the movie.'

Ilya, in disbelief: 'So you were *not* distracted?'

Shane eats his dinner in silence. The penne is great, even if he can't really finish it all. He makes sure Ilya knows that at least.

His second attempt takes place the following weekend, after he googles 'good movies about BDSM'. Both Shane and Ilya have come out of a rather fruitless conversation with Yuna, who had once again floated around the idea to talk to the league and the sponsors, until Shane finally cut her off with, 'Mom, we need to think about Ilya, too.'

'Sure,' she nodded. 'I understand that his sponsors may be a concern—'

'The sponsors, yes,' said Ilya. 'But also Putin.'

Ilya, less unsettled by the conversation than he would have been in the past, is now grabbing the remote and shutting Nymphomaniac Vol. 1 about twenty-one minutes into the film, and they can't find it in themselves to fuck for three days, because, as Ilya eloquently put it: Hollander, what the fuck was that?

There is no third attempt.

Still, in the following days, it consumes almost every waking thought, the breadth of possibilities unfurling in front of him:

He's in the shower fucking his hips into into his fist, but he's also face down on the floor, Ilya's cock relentless against his prostate and his hand tangled in his hair, pulling on his scalp, dragging his mouth up and down a floor-secured suction dildo, and he's gagging and dribbling and spluttering and moaning. All his holes filled, a wanton whore.

He's in bed, freshly showered and bone-tired after a gym session, arms thrown over his head and on the constellation of pretentious pillows, but his wrists are also bound together and his

legs cuffed to a spreader bar and he loves it, he has been fucked raw and gaping by a dildo because he was bad and didn't deserve Ilya's cock, and Ilya is turning him around, kneading his asscheeks and spitting into his asshole before three fingers press into it, pushing, abusing it, and it hurts and he loves it.

He's at the gym, on his third set of calf raises and after a two mile run on the treadmill, and yet he's also bent over the couch and he's counting, *One, please sir*, while Ilya's firm hand swings down on his ass and brands him his, and he'll wear his handprint like a tattoo, he will, *Two, sir, please, hit me harder, three, bite me, four, pinch me, scratch me, five, whatever you want.*

A week before they're due to drive over to the cottage, he's listening to Ilya's deep, even breathing, nuzzling his face into his armpit and inhaling, body wash and underneath that heady musk of his sweat, and yet he's also huddled under the duvet on a cold Canadian night, feet dandling off the bed, lube and come dribbling from his asshole and Ilya's soft cock in his mouth, a soothing weight on his tongue. Nothing more than a warm, wet hole.

He pushes himself half-upright against the bedrest. Ilya, playful, strong Ilya loves him and he's fantasising about being his cocksleeve, how pathetic is that? There is no way he can introduce this in a conversation, not if he doesn't want his boyfriend to realise that he's not only a control-freak, neurotic and emotionally stunted, he's also sick and somehow, for God's sake, still boring. Because there is one constant in all these fantasies, and that he's passive, he takes and takes and takes, and how can he ask Ilya to give him more? Ilya, who has given and given up. Ilya who has bared himself, who checks in on him and kisses him on the cheek when he makes love and tells him, true and vulnerable, that he will never go back to Russia. Shane is his home. Ilya who will listen to these and wonder, how can you believe me capable of this roughness? And—

'Shane,' says Ilya, squinting an eye open. 'I can hear you freak out in your head.'

Almost inaudibly: 'Sorry.'

'Why always at this time too,' Ilya groans, pushing himself up in his elbow. 'What is going on?'

It's early enough in the morning that the summer sky outside of the window is just a sliver of indigo between the heavy blackout curtains of the bedroom. But even half-asleep and disheveled, skin yellowish in the artificial glow of the beside lamp, Ilya is breathtaking: man in the cut of his jaw and the hoarseness of his voice, boyish in the earnestness of his eyes. Shane doesn't know how to do this in a way that won't hurt him. 'You should go back to sleep,' he whispers.

Ilya scoffs, 'нет. Talk to me.'

'I don't know where to start.'

'You can start from the beginning. We have the whole day.'

Silence stretches and swells.

Ilya speaks again, this time more softly. ‘Is there someone else?’

‘Uh?’ says Shane, rather unintelligently. A moment later, though, he’s clutching Ilya’s arm before his brain catches up with the rest of his body. ‘Wait, no. No, of course not. How can you think that?’

‘You have been different,’ says Ilya, sounding suddenly very, very small. ‘I saw you, watching porn on your laptop alone, some time ago. Middle of the night.’

‘I am pretty sure that was the furries.’

‘The furries,’ repeats Ilya, as if to get a taste of the word.

‘They wear collars and sort of act like dogs.’

‘You met a furry?’

Not an entirely illogical conclusion. ‘No.’

'I don’t understand.’

Shane chuckles, the sound somewhat wet. He can’t cry. There is no way he can cry now. ‘Yeah, neither do I.’

‘You’ve been on your phone a lot, typing—were you messaging someone or—’

‘No, Ilya.’

‘I know—’ Ilya trails off. In the corner of his eye, Shane sees his fingers reach for the cross resting above his heart. ‘I know you are too good. For me. But I need to know—I can’t—I need to understand—’

‘I was on Reddit.’

‘You found someone on *Reddit*?’

How did they even get here? ‘No,’ Shane says. ‘I was on Reddit because I am a bit of a freak, I think, and I was doing research.’

Ilya says nothing, but he seems to have steered from hurt and scared to confused, and Shane will take that over anything else, it’s fine. It'll be fine. He takes a deep breath, locks in on a random spot of the emerald green fitted sheet and eventually verbalises: ‘You should slap me.’

Something in Ilya’s expression seems to shatter. ‘Shane, no. Even if I am angry, I could never —’

‘Not now,’ says Shane, still looking at the same spot. ‘During sex. I want you to slap me during sex. And many other things. I am pretty sure I want you to breed me.’

He forces himself to turn to Ilya. Ilya blinks. Blinks some more. More than a minute later, and Shane knows because throughout the endless, agonising wait all he can do was glance at the nlog alarm clock on the table and read: 04:12, 04:12, 04:12, 04:12, 04:13, 04:13, Ilya finally says, 'I will make coffee. Come to the kitchen.'

The beans are Colombian Tolima, because Ilya hates the dark roasts and instant Nespresso: the Breville grinds and rumbles, the espresso dripping out with warm notes of chocolate and caramel, and in the meantime Ilya navigates the space with homelike assuredness, the way Shane has seen him move through his own apartment in Ottawa. His back bare, muscles flexing as he reaches for a pitcher, Shane categorises the spots he's kissed, the ones he's scratched, the few moles he told Ilya he should get checked out. Ilya fetches the *Vanillin-zucker* they found in an Eastern European supermarket in downtown Ottawa from the corner cabinet, adding a teaspoon into a ceramic pitcher, then a dollop of 10%-11% cream from the fridge. He takes a hold of the coffee machine's steam wand and dips it into the carafe, whirring.

His own coffee is simple, black, no sugar. Ilya's paler, sprinkled with sweet cinnamon on top of the foam. Shane doesn't like sugary foods and yet would spend days licking the vanilla off Ilya's tongue.

'So,' starts Ilya, reverie over. 'Do you want this to be a sofa conversation?'

Shane shakes his head. 'No, table is fine. Feels official. But, whatever I say, you can't tease me.'

'Okay.' Ilya blows softly into his steaming mug. 'Explain, please.'

The beginning, thinks Shane. Easy. 'A year ago, at the cottage, we were on the sofa, and I was on the phone to Hayden, and you gave me a blowjob. Stop nodding like that. And during the blowjob, you slapped me a couple of times, do you remember? You can nod now. And in the moment, I know I pushed you away, and I was pissed off, or, like, a bit frustrated, but when we were watching Fifty Shades a few weeks ago, there was this scene, with the beads and the, uh, spanking? Don't talk. And I remembered the feeling of your hand on my face, and I started fantasising about that. And it just got worse and worse from there. I mean, I already like being bossed around in bed.'

Ilya hums, sipping more of his coffee. 'I know. I am usually there. I like bossing you.'

'Right. Well, there's more I'd like to try, I think. And there's more I'd like you to do to me. I did so much research—I made a powerpoint presentation, took a test, made a list of things, kinks, really, that I'd want to discuss with you. I even looked up playlists we could have in the background.'

The corner of Ilya's mouth twitches. 'Show me.'

Shane grabs the laptop, dragging it towards them both, opens Spotify, and turns it around so Ilya can see his search history. Less then ten minutes into *songs i wanna get fucked to* 🥵, The Weeknd singing *Make that pussy poppin'* for the fourth time has Shane reach over to press stop and put an end to this un-negotiated humiliation.

‘You do not last five songs anyway,’ says Ilya after a few seconds. ‘If it helps.’

‘Well, fuck you, and no, it doesn't.’

‘Actually,’ adds Ilya, ‘I can find something for you, let me try,’ and types something, eyebrows furrowed, before turning the screen around.

The title of the playlist reads, *bratty submissive vibe,* and the indignant sound Shane lets out makes Ilya’s shoulder start to shake. Shane tries to whack him and Ilya laughs even harder, ducking, and it’s no wonder that what follows is a short and brutal chase around the apartment that ends with Ilya wrestled down into the bed, wrists pinned together and Shane’s chest rising and falling, his heartbeat erratic. He’s still cackling, the shithead, eyes glinting.

Outside, dawn is finally seeping into the sky in washes of gold and pink. Shane sits back, acutely aware of Ilya’s semi nestled in the cleft of his ass, and watches him: the first reverbs of sunshine catching in his mother’s necklace, the fine hair of his tummy and his arms visible only in this backlight. He wants a thousand of these mornings, he thinks, dragging the palm of his hands down Ilya’s arms, over his clavicles, his pecs, his stomach, and his heart, beating as hard as his own. He wants this banter and this laughter. If he can have this, then he’ll take everything else.

The clock reads 5.37am. They have the whole day. ‘You’re okay with this, then?’

‘I don’t think,’ starts Ilya, reaching out to trace the edges of his bottom lip with the pad of his thumb, ‘there is a way in which I don’t want you.’

‘This conversation was supposed to happen two weeks ago, you know,’ Shane admits despite himself. ‘We’d have had time to prepare ahead of the cottage. But I panicked. And procrastinated.’

‘Why at the cottage?’ asks Ilya. ‘I mean, why not here?’

‘The cottage is private,’ replies Shane. ‘And two weeks is enough time for a bruise to form and to fade.’

Ilya is quiet for a long time. Then, hoarsely: ‘Give me presentation, list, and test, Hollander.’

And:

No hard choking, is Ilya’s first boundary two days later, another sun-soaked day in Montreal. No canes or anything made of wood. He won’t do anything that will restrict both Shane’s hands and feet at the same time, and, if they do this more than once, the first few times there will be no blindfolds. All of this is non-negotiable. Ilya will start slapping him very lightly, nothing more than taps, and then gradually increase their strength and then keep it consistent.

‘I promise you can start harder than that,’ argues Shane.

No body-shaming. No extreme role play, at the beginning. Shane says stop, it means stop.

‘What if *you* say stop?’ Shane interrupts him, very conscious, all of a sudden, that this has indeed been all him, him, him.

Ilya makes a dismissive hand gesture. He’s sprawled on the unmade bed, half of the duvet spilled on the floor, the other half tucked under his foot. Ilya’s other other leg, bent at the knee, is being used as a make-do desk. ‘I doubt I will want to stop,’ he says, and that doesn’t sit well with Shane either, not quite.

‘Ilya—’

Interrupting him, but more quietly than anything he has said so far, Ilya adds: ‘I don’t want to use belts, though, for around the neck or for hitting. Never.’

Shane, at the end of the bed, stops playing with the bulging wrinkle of the flat sheet that has kept him occupied. ‘What about using them to restrain me?’

Ilya shoots him a glance Shane can’t quite decipher. ‘We can try,’ he allows eventually.

No Daddy kink, no age play, he continues. No food, no wax, or anything that may burn and scar. No fisting. No penetration with objects that are not meant for anal—technically a paraphrase of Ilya’s exact words, which were instead: ‘Only my cock, dildo or plug up your ass. I don’t want to go to hospital.’

And no group sex. No orgies. No threesomes.

At that, Ilya seems confused by the smile tugging at Shane’s lips. He looks up from his own list, handwritten rather than an excel spreadsheet, and raises an eyebrow. ‘Yes?’

‘You are also very boring.’

‘You know what they say,’ shrugs Ilya, looking back at his notes. ‘Sleep with dogs, wake up with fleas.’ He hums, tapping the pen against his thigh. ‘Do we need, uh, how you say. Gadgets?’

‘Gadgets?’

‘You know, like,’ and Ilya mimes something that’s either a wand casting a spell or a whip striking. ‘Tools.’

Something akin to embarrassment twists in Shane’s gut. It’s not entirely unpleasant. ‘Oh, well. Actually.’

Twenty minutes later, the bed has been made solely to be used to present the extent of his newfound debauchery, a testament that he can’t half-ass anything to save his life. Ilya, who was sporting an adorable pout as he was escorted and locked out of the bedroom, is now examining the display with near-clinical focus. Hands on hips and all.

The dildoes—three of them, one pink, one fuchsia, and the last a close match to Ilya’s skin tone and size—and two of the butt plugs, one thinner than the other, are familiar to them both. Shane uses them mostly when they’re apart, whether due to matches or sponsor

commitments or awards, keeps them hidden between his sweatshirts when he's away and in his nightstand when he's home, and he'll wait until they can facetime and Ilya can take over, Russian accent somehow thicker through the phone: Get my cock wet, Котик, and fuck it into you. Let me see.

There's a new third plug, though, also in black silicon, this one with a remote control next to it. 'And with six different modes,' Shane blurts out before Ilya has a chance to check. 'You promised not to tease me.'

'No, of course,' Ilya reassures him. 'I just didn't expect to compete for the Stanley Cup of BDSM.'

What's also unfamiliar to him, but definitely not to Shane, who has spent an inordinate amount of time and money on age-restricted websites, is the array of bondage gear carefully arranged in two rows. Ilya reaches out to trace the edges of an exquisite buckled collar with a soft blood-red inner lining, a silver chain and a matching leash, then moves on to the rest of the leather set, the pads of his fingers testing the feel of a silicone ball gag, the smooth edges of a black blindfold, and a pair of cuffs with a double-ended metal connector. He raises his eyebrows at a pair of nipple clamps, humming in approval; lingers on a flogger and takes his time to thumb its bouquet of braided tails, picking it up to test its weight.

The flex of his fingers on the handle makes Shane's head spin a little, his throat dry. Test it on me, he thinks. He wants to be raw and welted and sore, and it's pathetic, really, the depth of this longing, this greediness—

They've not even gotten to the whips.

'Shane.' Seemingly out of nowhere, Ilya's hands are cupping his face and his forehead is bumping into his, soothing. 'Stop panicking. I like it. I love it.'

'And you're not, like, weirded out.'

Ilya's thumb digs into his chin. 'I'm hard as fuck,' he admits, nosing up Shane's jaw, nuzzling the sensitive spot below his ear. He bites him once, twice, digging his teeth into the meat of his neck only to suck on the indents of his own teeth.

Shane nods towards the whips, his hands twitching uselessly down his sides. He can't think, he can't think, can't think. 'This one has a glass dildo as a handle, because, well. So you can —well—so it can be used—'

'As a tail.'

'Yes.'

'Practical,' says Ilya. 'Good boy.'

Shane drops his head against Ilya's chest, the knot inside his own unraveling. The praise does something to him, gets him pliant and content. 'I love you.'

‘I love you too.’ Ily presses a closed-mouth kiss against his temple. ‘You forgot something. though,’ he mouths against his skin.

‘What?’

‘Cock ring. But don’t worry, I got it. It will be delivered to PO box on the way to the cottage.’

Shane’s spine is tingling. ‘For me?’

‘No, for me. I found playlist and I like song number seven.’

The first few cracks of the other whip—a standard handle in green, matching his favourite bedsheets—are Shane whacking Ilya around the apartment, the echoes of their laughter bouncing across the walls.

*

Shane is balancing himself one hand on the sofa's armrest and the other on Ilya’s shoulders, grinding down on the cock splitting him open. ‘If I—If—oh fuck—if I asked,’ he gasps, throwing his head back, ‘at the cottage—oh fuck—’

‘Of all the moments,’ Ilya’s grunting, fingers digging in the other’s hips, ‘of all times you could have chosen—’

‘You’d stop,’ Shane manages to say, ‘wouldn’t you?’

Ilya bites down on Shane’s shoulder and seems to enjoy the sharp intake of breath and the little *uh, uh, uhs* that he starts to let out with every bounce. ‘But you will not ask me that,’ Ilya drawls.

‘No,’ Shane finds himself babbling, his cock smearing Ilya’s stomach with a steady leak of precome, ‘no, no, never, no—’

Ilya drags his teeth down the column of Shane’s throat, growling, ‘no, you will ask me to do it harder,’ and drives him down on his cock to the hilt in one brutal thrust.

*

Ilya disagrees with taking the entire bondage set with them, arguing that he does not want a premeditated murder charge if they get stopped anywhere on the way. ‘Trust me,’ he says, with a wink. ‘I have a plan. Follow my lead.’

Still, Shane bans him from watching any more true crime.

*

‘Have you ever tried this with Svetlana?’

After a second: ‘What, dominating her?’

‘Yeah.’

‘No, never.’ Shane, feeling slightly less nauseous, watches Ilya scissor his fingers in the air. ‘She would have snipped me, like tomcat.’

*

‘Shane, I have one more hard limit.’

‘Shoot.’

‘Lars von Trier.’

*

They got here three days ago, a mid-July breezy afternoon, Shane’s parents having been sent strict instructions not to approach the cottage if not with two days’ notice, a request they now knew better than to question. Shane locked the car with his heart already hammering in his chest, expecting, what? For Ilya to close the door behind them and ravish him?

Instead, Ilya dropped his Boston holdall in a corner of the master bedroom and appeared to forget about it, mellowing out in the quieter, private version of himself that is Shane and Shane’s alone. They’ve grilled burgers and hot dogs and enjoyed the patio, saturating the air in the burnt sugar of campfire-roasted marshmellows; they’ve napped on the sofa, they’ve played NHL 18 and even FIFA, Ilya winning at both with the loud, in-your-face smugness that had Shane storm out of the house in a futile attempt to run the frustration off.

And Ilya *has* been touching him—he’s stroked the back of his head and laid kisses down his stomach before taking him into his mouth, brushed the small of his back with his fingertips while Shane prepared dinner, and squeezed his shoulders after good football passes—and yet all this touching has done nothing but fuel this want, this desperate thrumming in his veins. Because the one thing Ilya hasn’t done is initiate penetrative sex or play.

And if the point of it all is for Shane to let go, then what is he supposed to do, when anything Ilya both does and doesn’t do is feeding into this furious need? His wet hair dripping in rivulets down the back of his head after a shower, and the arch of his foot hanging off the sofa, the rough inflection of his voice first thing in the morning and the straight line of his nose in the moonlight?

He’s gotten snappier by the minute, slamming cabinet doors and serving petulant, curt comebacks, and either Ilya hasn’t noticed or hasn’t cared enough to check in. And now, three days into this purgatory, he’s gone out to the farmer’s market or to the nearest town, whatever, who cares, and Shane has been left alone, moving and stomping around the cottage with the sort of nervous energy that he gets ahead of a game and with no way of releasing it, if not with the second gym session in eight hours.

Except, maybe.

The sun already dipping behind the swaying outline of the birth trees outside and and Ilya nowhere to be seen, Shane pours himself a glass of vodka on the rocks, takes a first determined sip and walks to the master bedroom before he can change his mind, kneeling beside Ilya's weekender bag.

The plug he finds is the bigger one, four inches with a tapered base personalised with Ilya's initials. Shane cannot find any of the implements he bought in there, though, his rummaging revealing only a pair of sneakers, some underwear and a couple of cardigans, and so he finds himself glancing at the ceiling to fight the lump on his throat, because, really, what was it all for? Disappointment and humiliation wash over him, simmering low in his belly, and he's thinking, Fuck you, then, Rozanov. Fuck you.

The throw pillows are amassed in a corner of the room, the comforter peeled back. He fishes an unopened bottle of lube from the nightstand and throws it on the mattress, briefly considering laying a towel to contain the mess and then deciding against it: let Ilya lie in the puddle of his come tonight while he enjoys the guestroom. His clothes, a grey t-shirt and matching joggers, are folded in a neat pile on the floor, by the pillows.

He wasn't wearing underwear. He'd opened up in the shower earlier this afternoon, before Ilya decided he had something better to do than *him*, so the first light touch of his index finger finds his hole loose but not wet enough. He takes another sip of his vodka and then laps his tongue around three of his fingers, pushes them into his mouth for good measure, trying to think of them, despite everything, as Ilya's—Ilya's, asking him to take them, to take *him* deeper, to be good for him—then moves them down to graze over his nipples.

The first twist doesn't feel like anything, though, almost as if he's been reprogrammed to respond only to Ilya's touch and the ghost of his breath over his chest. He makes sure that the second twist is hard enough to make him gasp, then does it again and again until his nipples are puffy and bruised, until his cock is hard against his stomach, leaking at the tip.

He can hear Ilya's voice in his head, both lovely and taunting, *You're so easy for me, Hollander.*

He swipes the pad of his thumb over his cockslit, fists himself a couple of times, then brings his wet, precome-slicked fingers to dance over his rim. He doesn't want it tender, doesn't want it gentle; he wants to feel it, now and tomorrow and a week from now: the first push, down to the second knuckle, is rough and glorious.

Legs spread, he dips his index and middle finger in and out of his hole, deliberately grazing over his prostate, allows himself to play with his ass and enjoy the feel of his hole clenching against his finger until he loses track of time. Doesn't even realise that hips are subtly pushing back against his own hand until a particularly harsh angle sends waves of pleasure travelling up his spine.

The first squeeze of lube, dripping over the plug and into the mattress, echoes into the otherwise quiet room, and yes, yes, yes—this is perfect, this is what he needs—he grabs the base of his cock as he works the toy inside his ass, legs bent at the knee over his chest. The widest part of the plug drags over his walls and flares and settles snugly against his prostate,

the pressure constant and maddening and perfect. He throws his head back, eyes squeezing closed, twisting it impossibly deep inside himself.

He's going to come like this, untouched and on a plug that bears the name of the man he loves. It won't take much longer, he knows, if he angles it against his prostate just right. He will—

There is the distinct sound of ice cubes clinking against glass. Shane's eyes snap open.

'Look at you,' says Ilya from the doorstep, but a quiet drawl, the shirt only unbuttoned halfway. 'Couldn't last three days without a cock. Did you even hear me come back?'

Shane's cock is twitching, because Ilya's here, looking devastating in the last shadows of the day and he is his, his, his. 'I could smell—*fuck*—your stupid perfume when you came in,' he lies between his teeth, but it has no bite, his head is fuzzy and light and Ilya's here, is *here*. 'Where—'

'Stop touching yourself. Legs down.'

Shane's hands fly to his sides before he can catch up, fingernails digging into the mattress and feet planted on the bed. The plug shifts inside of him. 'Ilya—'

He can see him try to hide a smirk behind his own glass. Then, Ilya tips his head back towards the living room, right where Shane left the bottle of Белая Берёзка. 'How much have you had?'

'A glass,' Shane answers quickly. 'Not even that. *Where* have you—'

'Нет,' says Ilya. 'Close your eyes again.'

The air's sizzling, electric, and Shane forces himself to count, *one, two, three,* seconds of quiet heat. Ilya must be barefoot, padding around the room. He thinks he can then the glass being placed on the nightstand, but he doesn't move, he's obeying, ignoring his own cock oozing beads of precome. Then, there is the sound of something clicking closed—the wardrobe door?—and some rustling and Shane counts, *seven, eight, ten, touch please, please touch me.*

The mattress dips under Ilya's weight as he straddles him. Shane's hands immediately find his thighs—Ilya's still fully dressed—and he's only grasping and tugging at the linen for a split second before his wrists are shoved back against the mattress with a tut, and *no*, he thinks, *No, I want you naked*, even opens his mouth to protest.

Ilya slaps him across the face, and the shock of it goes straight to his cock.

Then, Ilya's running his thumbs up and down the sides of his face, cheekbones to lips. He's asking, 'Open your eyes.'

He's calling out, 'Shane.'

He's whispering against his forehead, 'Shane, I need you to open your eyes now.'

Shane's eyes are wet and Ilya's face is indecipherable and otherworldly in the semidarkness, blurry at the edges. Later, he'll revisit tonight and pinpoint this as the moment tension and worry and doubt bled out of his body, will realise that the hit wasn't rough at all, more promise than pain, but right now it's as if the world is tilting and rearranging itself around the sting in his cheek and the weight of his hard, untouched cock.

There's so many words he could say—thank you, harder, again, please—but settles for the most urgent ones of all: 'I love you.'

The smile splitting Ilya's face is radiant and true. 'Colour is green?'

'It is,' says Shane. 'Fucking Dallas Stars green.'

The switch is immediate. Ilya is back in character: he slaps him again, and again, and again. Brat, he berates him. Look at me. Each swat is harder than the last, each has Shane clenching around the plug tucked deep inside him, jolts of pleasure running through his body. He's buzzing white noise, he's a live wire. He's never been as alive as he is now.

By the time he's satisfied with his handiwork, Ilya sits back on his legs, careful to avoid Shane's stiff cock, and looks down with a pleased expression. 'You are always so wet for me,' he muses. 'Like a girl.'

'Yes.'

Affectionately: 'My slut.'

Shane closes his eyes again, forcing himself to breathe deeply through his nose. 'Yes.'

The next thing he knows, Ilya is uncapping the bottle of lube and spurting a good amount on —his hands? But then something is sliding down his length, too thin to be Ilya's fingers, the pressure new and disorienting, and it can't be a condom, either, of course it's not a condom.

It's a cock ring. It's the cock ring they picked up on the way to the cottage, black silicone obscene against the taut skin of his dick.

'Exactly, like so, eyes open,' says Ilya.'Now turn around and suck my cock.'

'Naked,' Shane croaks out. Words seem just out of his reach. 'Want you—naked.'

'No.' Then, almost cooing: 'Is your mouth dry, baby?'

'Yes.'

Ilya's grip on turns tighter, rougher, until Shane's jaw slackens, lips dry and parted, and he's panting, like an animal, like a—

'Easy fix,' grins Ilya, and spits right into his mouth.

Ilya's cock, sticking out from his slacks, is pinker than his, curved at the tip. Hands off, Ilya said a minute ago, placing a pillow underneath Shane's hips, only to guide the palms of his

hands on his thighs for leverage with disorienting gentleness. He is now pulling his foreskin back to reveal the glistening head of his dick, and, *I love you*, Shane thinks, elbows digging into the mattress, *I love this cock and I love your hands and I love you*. He glides his tongue slowly around the glans and the ridged part underneath, moans loudly, tips his head to the side to kiss and lick down its length and bury his nose in the sparse hair of his groin, inhaling deeply, sweat and musk, the metal of Ilya's zipper digging into his abused cheek and the buckle of his belt bumping against his forehead.

Ilya grabs his chin and feeds him his dick at his own pace. Keeps him still and steady, pushes his cockhead against the inside of his cheek, then draws back and fucks into his mouth in tiny little increments, Shane breathing through his nose and his tongue curling against the underside of Ilya's cock.

'Я тебя хочу. Я хотела тебя весь день,' Ilya is saying, tracing the hollow of his cheek. 'я тебя люблю,' and Shane spreads his legs wider until the head of his own neglected cock is poking into the pillow.

'I don't know why you wanted music,' Ilya's musing, releasing his jaw to cup the back of his head. 'I like to hear you gag around me,' and Shane's throat flutters around him.

'Не останавливайся,' he's groaning, fucking harder into his mouth, 'You're made for this, you're made for me,' and Shane's hips move on their own accord, snapping fast and pathetic, cock stiff and pulsing and oversensitive and trickling against the bedsheets.

'быстрее,' says Ilya. 'Hump the pillow for me.'

He's now properly fucking his mouth, deep and powerful thrusts, reaching over to use Shane's hips for leverage with a bruising grip. Shane's world is spit and precome and tears, but he can take it, he will take it, he's humping the pillow like a good boy, like he's been told to, like a good pet. It doesn't matter that he can't come as long as Ilya is buried into his mouth, as long as he's groaning and grunting and pushing into him. He will do anything, he will—

Ilya draws a hand back and brings it down between his asscheeks, against the plug splitting his ass open.

Shane seizes, the dick in his mouth muffling his moaning and eyes rolling in the back of his head. He's going to come. His cock is twitching, hot and impossibly stiff, he's going to come with the ring still on, and it will hurt and he will love it, will beg for it again and again, will —

Ilya draws back, a trail of saliva and precome still connecting him to Shane's lips, grabs the ruined pillow and throws it on the floor. Then he's dragging him up, Shane's body pliant and yielding against his, and he's kissing him, licking into his mouth with hunger and love and devotion.

'Colour,' he whispers. 'Shane, colour.'

Shane says, 'Green.'

Ilya looks down. ‘Don’t come,’ he warns. His mouth latches on Shane’s neck, tongue sweeping against it, then he bites down, no gentleness to it.

Maybe he’s trying to distract him, because the next thing he’s aware of is Ilya pulling the ring off his dick with a featherlight touch. ‘Fuck, shit,’ Shane babbles, fuck, fuck, fuck, his hips grinding forward into the air.

Ilya lands another ringing slap across his face, harsh and grounding, then turns him onto his front again, shoves him down with a hand between his shoulder blades and the other kneading at his asscheeks. And Shane can do nothing but take it, rub his face into the bed, breathing harshly and open-mouthed. His mind is a litany: *Fuck me, please fuck me, fuck me, fuck me.*

‘Colour,’ asks Ilya, closer than Shane thought.

He gasps, ‘Green.’

Five smacks on his ass in quick succession. Ilya grabs a hold of both of Shane’s wrists and twists them behind his back. ‘Colour.’

Shane says, one last time, ‘Green,’ and Ilya kisses the back of his neck.

He’s still holding him while he licks around the base of the plug, still holding him while he fucks the toy in and out of his ass and finally twists it out, Shane moaning and thrashing and struggling uselessly. His grip is delicious and bruising as he spits on the reddened, raw skin of his rim and lines the blunt head of his cock against him.

Then, he’s draping himself over Shane, chest to back, he’s wrestling Shane’s hands upwards next to his head.‘Я тебя люблю,’ he mouths wetly against his neck, pushing in, the first slide slow and tortuous and perfect, and fuck, he's *still dressed*. ‘So good, so wet for me, I love you, I—’, and the universe narrows down to this:

The drag of Ilya’s cock inside him, the momentum picking up. The slap of skin against skin, Ilya's belt buckle digging into the meat of his ass. Every push has Ilya buried to the hilt, brutal and perfect, Shane helpless and shoved up the bed with the force of his thrusts, and there’s nothing else, nothing but this white hot pleasure and the slick smell of sex and sweat, and, underneath, the last traces of Ilya’s perfume, chocolate, cinnamon and sandalwood.

Finally, Ilya bears down in slow, circling grinds, deeper and deeper and deeper. He drapes himself over his body and plunges two fingers inside Shane’s waiting mouth, and grunts, ‘I’m coming, I’m coming, come for me,’ and the last thing Shane feels before he’s shooting off between his stomach and the mattress, almost delirious, is the cold metal of Ilya’s cross between his shoulder blades.

*

Of course, Ilya plugs him back full of his come.

*

Shane will remember this specific shower forever, the gentle touch of Ilya cupping his forehead to rinse his hair and the careful brush of his fingers where he was the sorest, and will remember the breakfast—lunch, really—that follows, Ilya plating up homemade banana pancakes and that sweet coffee of his. ‘My mother used to make it,’ he says. ‘Try it for me.’

They ended up using the main guestroom last night, with a mutual and silent resolve to deal with the master bedroom and the bedding at a later time. According to Shane, the time is now, while they’re wrapped around each other on the sofa and watching Secretary (2002) on streaming. ‘We really do have to clean it. It’s disgusting.’

‘I think we may have to burn it,’ Ilya mumbles against his shoulder. ‘Later, though, the movie is good.’

‘You know,’ Shane says after a moment, as serious as can be. ‘I have found a song for the next time we want to play.’

‘Yeah? A sex song?’

Shane turns around, a bit awkward in the cramped space between Ilya’s arms. ‘Very sexy. I know you like to hear me, but it’s worth it, promise. Give me your phone.’

Ilya, who was playing with his hair, immediately goes to fish his iPhone from behind him and hands it over, visibly intrigued. Even lowers the TV volume while Shane types the title on the Spotify search bar.

It’s clear that he recognises the instrumentals immediately. He bites his bottom lip and brings a hand against his face, fighting a smile. ‘My God, I can’t believe I’m in love with you, Shane Hollander.’

‘There lived a certain man in Russia long ago,’ sings Shane with a shit-eating grin. ‘He was big and strong, in his eyes a flaming glow,’ and he knows he will remember this, too:

The perfect column of Ilya’s throat as he tilts his head back and laughs, loud and unabashed and loved.

The tender, playful slap on the cheek that follows.

End Notes

Can't believe that Heated Rivalry got me to dust the smut gloves I'd hung [checks notes] about six years ago.

I haven’t read the books, so please excuse any plot-holes or inconsistencies, and i don’t speak Russian, so any words in Cyrillic are the results of research on Reddit and various language forums, any mistakes mine and mine alone.

What else? That Irina was a ballet dancer is just a headcanon of mine; Ilya is wearing Nasomatto's Pardon; the title is from Richard Siken's Snow and Dirty Rain; the last 3,000 words were written today and will be edited tomorrow, because I need this work to be out in 2025. Happy New Year.

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