

Four Months

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Four Months

by [hideunspoken](#)

Summary

Shane finally finds out what Ilya said during the phone call in Russian.

Notes

This takes place before the epilogue in The Long Game during their hockey camps that summer.

When Ilya had suggested the ‘Queer NHL Players Club’ should have their next meeting at Bar Le Stud, Shane rolled his eyes before tapping out a message to the volunteer coaches in town for the upcoming Montreal hockey camp. The name was a little on the nose, but Shane appreciated the vibe immediately. A wide range of people mingled, played pool, and drank, and the warm light of the gay bar was inviting, welcoming. Shane could hardly believe such a place existed just a few blocks away from his former home.

Scott Hunter and his husband, Kip, were the first ones to arrive, and Scott looked less than pleased about that fact, glancing around the bar desperately as Ilya grinned maniacally and jumped up to greet them.

“Kip! Nice to see you again. This is my husband, Shane.”

Ilya had taken to introducing Shane to every new person they met in much the same manner since the wedding, relishing the words as he spoke them carefully. Shane hadn’t been allowed to introduce himself to anyone for weeks.

When Scott excused himself to order their drinks, Ilya tagged along, claiming it was “In case you get lost.” Kip watched his irritated husband being dragged away and shared a private smile with Shane.

“Thank you so much for inviting me along,” Kip said. “I’ve been wanting to visit Montreal for a long time.”

“Yeah, of course. We’re happy to have you both here, especially with how chaotic the end of the season has been.”

“Right. How has it been being, you know, out in the open?”

Shane let out a long sigh. “Bit of a media circus, honestly, but I’m sure you both know all about that.”

Kip nodded sympathetically as the men returned from the bar, Ilya’s arm now hanging around Scott’s shoulder. It would have looked genial if not for Scott’s hostage-like expression as he shrugged Ilya off immediately and placed a beer in front of his husband.

“What are we talking about?” Ilya asked, plopping back into his seat and wrapping an arm around Shane instead who had to smother the grin threatening to overtake his face. He was really sitting in a gay bar in Montreal with his husband’s arm around his shoulders. Shane leaned in closer.

“Dealing with the media,” he replied.

“Oh, yes. Much press. More than yours.” Ilya nodded towards Scott who rolled his eyes and took a quick swig of his beer.

“It’s not a competition, Rozanov.”

“Why not? We would be winning.”

“I don’t know how you’ve put up with him for so long, Hollander,” Scott grumbled.

“How long has it been?” Kip asked politely, jabbing his husband lightly with his elbow.

“That’s a bit of a complicated question,” Shane replied.

“Ah, yes. When do you start the clock? First kiss? First fuck? First time he did not kick me out of his bed?”

“I did not—” Shane refused to let himself be baited and decided to answer instead. “We’ve been more serious for about four years but on and off for around eleven? We really need a better answer to that question before he goes rattling that off to a reporter.”

“Wow.” Kip actually sat back in his chair at the news. “We were only together in secret for a few months, and I thought that was unbearable enough.” Scott ducked his head in agreement.

“Yes, well, we have patience of saints,” Ilya said.

—

The table grew more and more crowded as first Troy and Harris showed up then Ryan Price who looked even more awkward than usual without his boyfriend by his side this year. Shane had long since relaxed into the calming hand at the back of his neck that gave soothing strokes as the men drank and joked and laughed. Price had even cracked a smile once or twice, which made Ilya look proud at having delivered the quips responsible.

“So, which one of you said ‘I love you’ first?” Kip asked, snuggled up so close to Scott that they may have been sharing a single chair. It might have been a natural continuation of the conversation but Shane had zoned out a bit, sleepy and content, and missed the lead-up.

“Me.” Ilya said it with a winning grin, like it had been a contest. Shane rolled his eyes and knocked his head into Ilya’s arm.

“Well I said it back like ten seconds later.” He decided to leave out the part where his initial response had been *holy shit*. In his defense, he had just received the shock of a life time.

“Mmm, no,” Ilya disagreed with a firm shake of his head.

“What, twenty then?”

“*Nyet*. Was maybe four months later.” Ilya’s hand was completely dislodged as Shane straightened up to turn to him, much more alert now.

“What the fuck are you talking about?”

Ilya’s grin turned into a shy smile, and he placed his free hand on Shane’s thigh instead. “Not your fault for not knowing. I said it in Russian first. You could not speak it then.”

Shane was gobsmacked, vaguely aware of his jaw hanging open.

“Four months? When?”

“On the phone. Last time I was in Russia.”

Shane’s face softened when he recalled the exact moment. *Tell me everything you want to say. In Russian.* He could still hear the way Ilya had spoken, the desperate quality to his voice as he unloaded his emotions to Shane.

“You told me all the way back then?” Swallowing, he glanced around, but the couples were exchanging their own looks, and Price had looked down, almost like he was trying to avoid intruding.

“Was not so romantic.” Ilya shrugged. “I was not happy about it at the time.”

Shane choked out an awkward laugh. “Right.”

When the silence went on a little too long, Troy spoke up, “Well, I think it’s sweet. I told Harris at work. Very unprofessional of me.” They shared a private smile, but the conversation became background noise as Shane’s eyes locked on Ilya’s hand still on his thigh. He covered it with his own, and Ilya’s palm flipped up, intertwining their fingers together.

Eyes glinting with unshed tears, Ilya tried to look away, but a firm squeeze from Shane stopped him.

Four additional months had gone by without Shane knowing Ilya had told him he loved him. It was years ago, but Shane still felt a small flicker of grief at the thought of having missed that initial confession, knowing Ilya had held it in for even longer than he had realized.

Shane leaned in close, his voice a low, private whisper, “*Ya lyublyu tebya.*”

Ilya closed the gap with a soft, barely-there kiss.

“*Ya tebya lyublyu.*”

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