

Sound of sirens, rush of pain (I almost thought I heard you call my name)

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by [17darwinism](#)

Summary

"He imagined Shane would be similarly unforgiving if Ilya took his own life. Not that Ilya ever would. Unless he couldn't help it." (The Long Game)

or,

Two years after being diagnosed with depression, Ilya wants to commit suicide.

Notes

okay. happy heated rivalry ep6!!!! happy fluffy all around we love to see it. i started crying halfway through and i think i still havent stopped to be honest??

so in the midst of all that love what do i do? i post angst. LMFAO

i wanna note that i started writing this around when ep 4 came out so a girl was IN HER FEELS,,, annddd i wont lie and say i dont have a little beef with how The Long Game deals with Ilya's depression..... anyway yeah enjoy this!! heed the warnings for the suicidal thoughts n discussion of them, take care of yourself first. i try not to go into EXTREME detail for the sake of myself as well but pls recognize ur own limits !! <333

thank you to my darling [joce](#) for helping me with this ficccc i love uuuuuuuuuuuuuuu

and read the note at the end before you yell at me

edit: fuck AI. i forgot to add this previously bc i figure its a fucking given. nothing i write will ever even slightly include AI. and if u support AI, i will kindly ask you to get off my page. thanks :)

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

- Translation into Русский available: [Звук сирен, вспышка боли \(Мне показалось, что ты позвал меня по имени\)](#) by [smalltowngirl \(Bowtie\)](#).

The thing about wanting to kill yourself, Ilya had found, is that you don't notice it at first.

It starts slow. It starts with not looking both ways when you cross the street. With not getting as happy when you score a goal, when you win a game. With dragging your feet to even do the things you love. It creeps up on you. It creeps up on you, and then, one day, you realize that you wouldn't exactly mind if you didn't wake up in the morning.

But he would never actually do anything about it.

That much was for certain, he was sure. He would be fine. He would be fine like he had always been. No one needed to worry.

Shane had only been a little alarmed when Ilya announced his retirement. It was not exactly because of the retirement itself—though even that was cause for concern—it was that he hadn't talked to his husband before doing it. Somewhere deep *deep* down, Ilya could admit that he wanted Shane to confront him that day, to throw it in his face that his husband wouldn't just *give up* hockey like this. But he didn't.

He supposed that Ilya had defended himself well.

Told him he realized that hockey just doesn't make him as happy as it used to, and he needed out because there were things *out there*. That he wanted to focus more of his attention on the Irina Foundation. He categorically didn't mention that Galina had told him he should wait, but instead he drove to the rink and he told the boys (and his husband) that that season would be his last.

The Centaurs hadn't believed it themselves until he announced it on his socials a month later.

Galina noticed bigger changes than just retiring from hockey around then. It was around then, too, that the feeling of *wanting* to die started to consolidate itself. He had promised himself he wouldn't lie in therapy, but he hadn't promised anything about not bringing it up at all. She pointed out the changes, but he brushed them off as this, or that. It wasn't outright lying. He was allowed.

He was elated to get to win another Cup with the Centaurs, before his retirement. A feeling that had propelled him so high up that he almost regretted retiring. But it had been fleeting, and so, he didn't dwell on it.

As of right now, he was sat on a bench in Boston. Shane and the team were playing a game there that night. Ilya had been retired less than a year, and he has been... lying to himself that he enjoys it. It wasn't something that he didn't expect. Somewhere in his conscience, he knew that retiring wouldn't help reduce his *feeling*. Somewhere in his conscience, he even knew that it would only make it worse.

It was late January, and he had spent the last few months either travelling with Shane whenever he had a game; at home, at the Irina Foundation offices (not as often as he wanted to be); or at their cottage in Ontario. It wasn't much living.

He supposed he didn't want to do much living, so he had no room to complain. If he wanted to, he wouldn't have flaked on his second session with Galina in a row. Or, at the very least, he would be at the hotel with Shane and not *lying* that he was somewhere holding an online session with Galina at all.

Shane would worry, though.

And no one needed to worry. He was fine. He just hated lying to Galina, and he didn't want her to look at him like that. Like she knew he was lying.

As far as anyone was concerned, it was business as usual. He took his meds—semi regularly, at least. And he really had been going to his biweekly meetings with Galina up until recently.

Ilya Rozanov was fine.

It was April. Shane was in Detroit for a game, Ilya was back at home—something that was back to becoming their routine. Shane somewhere, Ilya somewhere else. Shane supposed that he should've expected it, when Ilya retired, that he was going to see him less and less. That the trend of him travelling around for games was going to be short-lived.

The entire thing still felt a little surreal.

Shane had barely gotten to play on the same team as Ilya before he retired. But he could understand his husband. He could understand that out of the two of them, it was Shane who *loved* hockey, and it had become something that Ilya hadn't enjoyed as much anymore—that's what he had told him, and what he had told everyone. Shane didn't know if he believed it, but he did know that it felt wrong to question it. It felt wrong to insinuate that Ilya was lying to him, that there was something deeper going on.

He shuddered at the thought.

Wyatt gives him a look from next to him. "What?"

"Nothing."

Another look.

"Just thinking about Rozanov."

Wyatt bumps Shane's knee with his, Shane gives him a small nod of appreciation. The team had taken Ilya's absence about the same as Shane did. The fact that they *to this day* called Ilya "Cap" when he was on the road with them was telling enough.

Another bump from Wyatt's knee makes Shane come back to his senses and realize that the boys in the locker room were huddled around Boody and his phone.

"What are you idiots *doing!*" Ilya's voice comes from the phone, "Who's your captain? Let me talk to him," the boys laugh and beckon him and Wyatt over. Boody turns the phone to Shane, his helmet and gloves hanging from his hand. Ilya's eyes soften for a single moment.

He seemed to be laying on their couch, shirtless which Shane doesn't not miss. "Who taught you to play hockey, Hollander?"

"I know it's not the man who retired before Hunter talkin'," Shane throws back with a crooked smile. He hears the team laugh but he also sees a flicker of emotion in Ilya's face before he masks it.

"Alright, Cap, tell us how it's fuckin' done then" someone asks him and Bood turns his phone back around.

"You—"

"I will tell you losers how to play hockey" Shane hears Svetlana's voice and realizes that she was there with him. It wasn't uncommon for her to be at their house, she was his best friend after all. Shane was glad they had each other, especially now that Ilya was alone so often.

Shane drowns out the conversation, knowing that Ilya and Svetlana both trusted Shane and all his words were just to fuck with him and his team and Svetlana was, most likely, actually giving good advice to everyone. Advice he had heard during their long time together at the cottage. He keeps replaying the expression he'd seen on Ilya's face, wondering what it had meant, wondering if he'd crossed a line for mentioning his retirement like that.

He blinks when he hears Ilya mention him again, "Give the phone to my sexy husband," and then Bood's phone is promptly shoved in his phone with a warning from him to not 'get freaky on his phone'.

"Moy khokkeynaya klyushka," Ilya says when Shane steps away from the team.

"Hockey stick? Really?"

"Just because I am not there does not mean you get to.....how you say, slack off?" Shane nods softly, a smile on his face. "Good job," Shane had most of the words down, even two years after starting to learn, he was rusty as speaking it but Ilya smiles fondly back at him anyway, then he says, "I miss you."

"I miss you, too, darling. Come to Buffalo?"

Another expression of emotion flickers over his face, before it's gone again, "We will see."

"Ilya—"

Shane is cut off by the announcement that it was time to get on the ice. Ilya tells him to go and then hangs up after they exchange 'I love you's. He doesn't miss Wyatt's lingering eyes as he grabs his stick and walks behind the team.

Ilya lingered by the door of the locker room where the Cens were getting ready for practice. Their game wasn't until that afternoon, and Ilya had decided to surprise all of them by showing up (semi) unannounced. Shane, and then later Bood and Wyatt, had invited him to go, rambling on about how they miss having him around.

His absence had been partly by design. He wanted the team to consolidate and stand on its own two feet without him in it, now. Some part of him wanted them to get used to not having him around, but that part of him was small, and he wasn't important.

He lingered by the door and listened to their disjointed conversations. He rested his head on the wall, catching fragments of game strategies, gossip, *Shane's voice*.

"Ilya?" the voice almost made him jump out of his skin. When he turned around, he saw Harris standing a few meters away from him with a camera in hand. "What a nice surprise!" he says after gathering himself and the look in his eye that made Ilya recoil into himself.

"Don't ruin it, yeah?"

Harris searched Ilya's eyes for a handful of moments, Ilya wondered if he could find any answers in them. Hoped that he couldn't. Then he said, "Are you not telling them you're here?"

Ilya lulls his head back toward the door, still hearing the laughter and joy radiating from inside the room. Then he shakes his head slowly, "No. They seem busy."

"Ily—" but he walks away before Harris can convince him.

He shouldn't have shown up at all. It was nice to get the confirmation that his stupid plan had worked, that they were getting used to being without him.

He doesn't get very far before he realizes that Harris had ratted him out. Shane grabs his shoulder and before he knows it he's being engulfed in a hug. "Stupid man, where do you think you're going?" he says into his neck and Ilya. Ilya positively melts.

"I didn't want to ruin it," Ilya said softly.

Shane hugged him tighter. Then, he shifts his hold on Ilya so that he's the one nuzzled into Shane's neck. "You could never ruin anything," he says softly, pressing his lips on top of Ilya's head, nuzzling his curls with his chin, "Not—... *Never* for me, or the team."

"Shane—"

He pulls back, holds his face in his hands. Ilya feels overwhelmed as he looks into Shane's eyes suddenly. "I love you. You hear me?"

Ilya nods. "I love you, too," he mumbles softly. Shane nods back and pulls him back into his chest. It was still unusual to have Shane treat him like this. It still felt like he was just making a big deal out of nothing most days. Almost like he senses it, Shane presses his lips to Ilya's temple and whispers another *I love you*.

"I'm so glad you're here," Shane says softly. "I missed you so much."

"I missed you too," Ilya answered, hearing his own voice shake. "So much."

And Shane just holds him. And Ilya appreciates it. He doesn't need to feel smaller than he already does.

After a while, "Wanna see everyone?" he mutters, like he was sensing that the words were going to scare Ilya. It wasn't that they scared him.

Okay, it was.

He hated that part of his *feeling*. Feeling like he takes up useful space, feeling like a burden. But he supposed it came with the territory. And it seemed like Shane was fine with consoling him about it.

Until he wouldn't be, but Ilya should take his battles on one at a time.

He shakes his head into Shane's shoulder. "Okay. What do you wanna do?"

Shane was being so gentle with him. It was making him feel sick.

"Think they'll let me skate?"

He feels Shane laugh. His body tenses, and then, he feels Shane running his hand up and down his back, like a silent apology. "I can ask."

About ten minutes later, Ilya is being fitted with a pair of skates. He isn't sure what Shane told the people working the rink, or how he convinced their coach to let them push back practice by a while, but he did know that he was grateful to see that it was only Shane standing on the sidelines watching him skate.

"Still faster than you, Hollander!"

"Shut up, Rozanov, you never were!"

With four days until their next game, Shane had gotten the first flight in and driven straight to the cottage. Ilya didn't feel much of anything these days, but he knew he felt happy to have Shane at home. To wake up to him saying, "*Your turn to take her outside*" as if they were taking care of a baby and not Anya. Ilya grumbles. "*I let her outside yesterday, sweetheart, up and at 'em*"

Ilya pushes himself up and off the bed, throwing his pillow over Shane's sleepy head and putting on his slippers with Anya zooming around the room, barely waiting to go outside. Ilya smiles softly when he hears the pillow thud on the floor behind him.

He opens the back door for Anya and sits on the stairs of the porch, moving his eyes from one end to the other as she got the zoomies out of her system. Someone told him once that a dog that gets zoomies is a happy and healthy dog. He was glad to know that he at least had gotten something right.

"Anya, blizhe!" he shouts when Anya wanders of a little farther than usual.

“You know she won’t run off, she never does”

He turns to see Shane walking towards him, then back around to check that Anya had heard his command. He feels Shane take a seat next to him on the stairs. Silently he hands Ilya a mug of herbal tea. “Thought it was my turn with the baby,”

“It *was* until you threw a pillow at me,”

Ilya tsks, “I barely even touched you with it.”

“You’re such a fucking asshole.”

Ilya smiles softly. He wishes he could stay like this forever. *They* could stay like this forever, their little family.

It seems that no one hears his—deeply unstructured—praying because it’s not a minute later that Shane says, “I’ve been meaning to talk to you about something,” and his entire body freezes. He pulls up the mug to his lips and hums softly, hoping that his husband had missed the burst of panic that had shot through him. “The other day, when we were in Detroit for the game...”

Ilya looks at him then, needing to know what he looked like. Needing to gauge where he was going with this conversation. Shane looked apprehensive, but it strangely calmed Ilya down to see him like that. To know that on some level, this was hard for him to bring up like it was for him to hear.

“Okay,” Shane says when Ilya doesn’t comment, “I made a joke about you retiring. And you... didn’t seem to... um, react.”

“Spit it out, Hollander, what are you asking me?” Ilya asks, and then internally cringes. Shane frowns, looks at Anya then back at him.

“I wanted to apologize, if it was out of line. It was the first time I’d brought up your retirement to you, *at all*, since it happened and maybe it was... in poor taste.”

Ilya said nothing and looked ahead at the water. He remembered the joke that Shane had made. He didn’t want to talk about it.

“Do you...” Shane stops. He probably senses that Ilya doesn’t want to talk about it, and that thought itself transports Ilya to the first decade, give or take, of their relationship. *That* thought, being back in that place with Shane, was worse than bearing a conversation that was teetering on the edge of something that Ilya didn’t want to admit. His *feeling*.

He reaches his hand out and puts it on Shane’s thigh. He moves his leg closer to Ilya’s and Ilya knows that he has conveyed the message. “Do you not want me to joke about your retirement like that? Do you not want me to talk about it at all? I realize that we *really* haven’t talked about it, and I’ve only briefly mentioned it and—”

“Shane,” Ilya says softly, and it puts a stop to his ramblings. Ilya snuffles softly, feeling the cold air of Ontario mornings in his lungs. “I do not think it has to do with you.”

His husband stays quiet. Waiting. Ilya doesn't know if it makes him feel better or worse.

"I think..." Ilya stops. He realizes that admitting to Shane that he regrets it—regrets retiring—might be worse than just telling him *literally* anything else. "I think it is just hard. Getting used to this." he looks at Shane then, he doesn't admit to himself it's because he wants to check that Shane is believing his lie. "I am not ready with jokes yet."

"Okay," he nods, "That's okay. It was my fault for not making sure before. I'm sorry."

Ilya breathes deeply.

It was fine. He didn't ask.

Shane takes his mug from him and the conversation is over. It's over. He's fine. They're fine. No one has to know.

But then Shane pauses, "Harris said something to me."

Shit.

"He said he's worried for you. That something seems... wrong." Ilya looks at him, hopes that the look on his face at least remotely implies that he is surprised that Harris would even imply this.

"When did he say that?"

"Buffalo, after you left. He said there was... how did he put it?" he wonders to himself, "Something about you that made him think that something could be wrong. That's why he ended up telling me you were there." Ilya makes a small noise of acknowledgement. "Is there... Is that true? *Is* something wrong?"

He tries not to think about the fact that he hasn't just brushed it off. That there was a part of Shane that agreed with what Harris was saying.

"No," he answers, easily, "Nothing is wrong."

Shane looks slightly relieved, "He seemed really apprehensive. Said he'd talked to Troy and he agreed and—" he pauses to breathe. "I told him that it's just your depression." Ilya nods. The team was informed of Ilya's depression while he was still playing, they had figured—together—that it was the right move. "It is, right?"

For a second, for just a second, Ilya contemplated it. He contemplated telling Shane that he regretted retiring. He contemplated telling him that he had missed more sessions with Galina. He contemplated telling him about *the feeling*.

Then, "Yes. Like I said. It has been hard getting used to."

Shane's shoulders droop in relief. He leans forward and kisses Ilya. Then he walks into their house.

The first time Ilya had started seeing Galina, he had not missed a single one of his sessions. He had been punctual and present at every single one. The second—and current—time that he started seeing Galina, he had missed five of their sessions together.

So many, in fact, that Galina had seemed surprised when she actually saw him in the waiting room. She tried to hide it, but Ilya had long gotten good at reading people.

“I noticed you were surprised to see me,” Ilya says, in Russian, when they sit down.

She clicks her pen open, “I was not surprised, Ilya.” she replies, and Ilya feels himself relax at the sound of hearing another person speaking Russian. Sure, Shane was learning it, but it was a piece of home that he missed the most. “I was *glad* to see you.”

“Glad,” he repeats, surprise in his tone.

She doesn’t say anything for a moment. Then, “Do you think I am mad at you when you don’t come to our sessions?”

Ilya doesn’t expect the question. He supposes that’s what it sounds like to her. He shakes his head, but Galina doesn’t say anything. “Maybe a little,” he relents.

“Why do you think I’m mad at you?” she asks, the question is forward but Ilya has long asked her to be straight with him—someone had to be.

“I...” he trails off. Galina waits, never making him feel like he needs to get a move on and gather his thoughts. “I guess I think that *you* think I’m giving up. When I don’t come, I imagine you thinking that I’m giving up and I don’t have it in me to get better.”

She hums, Ilya senses she’s itching to write that one down. “Do you need me to tell you that I don’t think that?”

“I figure you don’t, because you never do.”

“Then why do you think that?” she asks. Ilya doesn’t answer. Galina shifts slightly in her seat, and pivots her approach. “Do you think that every time you’ve missed one of our sessions?”

He almost wants to laugh. It didn’t feel like that she was saying it just to throw it in his face, but he still felt guilty for creating the space to have that question be asked. He should be trying. He should be trying his damn hardest to get better, for Shane, and yet he wasn’t. “I think it a lot recently.”

“What does a lot mean?” he shrugs, “Everyday?” he shakes his head. “Every other day?”

“It’s every day. I lied. I think it every day.” he amends, she writes something down. “I don’t mean to, and I hate it when it happens, but I can’t stop it.”

“We have talked about this before,” she says gently, “It’s not about stopping it,”

“It’s about adjusting it,” he nods. He looks down on his lap and plays with his fingers. “I’ve been, um, thinking. About my mother. It’s almost her twenty year anniversary soon. And...” he drops his head and hides his face in his hands. “I don’t know. I have no fucking clue.”

“What don’t you know?”

“Why it feels so much worse than any other year.”

“How does it feels worse?”

He keeps his hands on his face, not wanting to see how Galina is looking at him. “I’ve started to understand her so much more recently.”

“Understand her how?”

He shrugs, “How hard it must’ve been for her.”

When he doesn’t speak for a long time, Galina finally breaks the silence, “Ilya. I have a question.”

“You have a lot of questions,” he finally moves his hands away and looks at her. He blinks a few times, realizing that his eyes had been teary the entire time.

Galina doesn’t react to his joke, she keeps her face even, and says, “Have you been taking your medication?”

Well.

There it is.

“No.”

~~“I’m sorry, I know I promised you I would never do this.”~~

“At all?”

“I take them sometimes. Few times a week.”

She closes her notebook and places it on the table along with her pen. She gathers her hands in her lap and leans forward, “Is there a reason why you’re not taking your medication, Ilya?”

He shrugs. “No. I don’t know. It doesn’t feel like it’s working,” Galina opens her mouth, “I know. I know what you’re going to say. You’re going to say that they do work and the fact that I think they’re not working is proof that they are working. I know. I just...”

“Ilya, if you do want to get better, like you’ve said you want to, you have to take your medication. It’s not a matter of when you *want* to take them. If you want it to work you have to take them regularly.”

“This,” he huffs, “is why I didn’t want to talk about this.”

“What is *this*?”

He doesn't say anything at first. “I can't backtrack this, can I? You won't listen if I say I don't want to talk about this?” she shakes her head. At least she's honest. “Okay. And if I say I'll start taking my meds again?”

“I am slightly inclined to believe that you won't. Not unless we talk about this.”

Ilya was starting to dislike silences. There was a lot that sat in the air when a room was silent, and it was always more than Ilya could stand.

“Okay, new idea.” Galina says, “I would like to talk about your mother again.”

He meets her eyes.

“You say that you are understanding her more than you ever have. What did that mean?”

“It meant nothing.”

“Ilya, please indulge me.”

He scoffs, “Galina, there is nothing to say. My mother was depressed, like me, and she killed herself.”

“That is precisely why I would like to talk about this.”

His eyes fall back on her notebook on the table. It felt way more intimate like this. He never realized how much of a safety net that notebook provided until now that it was on the table.

“Ilya,” he looks back up at her again, “You're safe here.”

Ilya suddenly feels overwhelmed. He presses his hand to his chest, and tries to not panic. He's been doing that a lot, and it didn't get any less unpleasant the more it happened.

“There is nothing you can say that can get you in trouble, you know that?” he nods, barely, “Good. There's also the fact that you don't *have* to tell me anything, but I do think that you want to.”

His eyes fall on the clock on the wall. They still had so much time left.

~~“Take care of Anya.”~~

“A long time ago, I said that I would never think about... being like my mother.” he starts, speaking slowly, trying to not give himself away—and probably failing. “Then I started to think if that's childish of me.”

“What do you mean when you say ‘being like your mother’?”

“Killing myself,” he says it quickly. He says it so fast that he's almost sure he didn't even say it. But then he sees Galina's face change, ever so slightly, and he knows that he did.

“Why would that be childish?”

“I’m sick like her. I am her son. Isn’t it naive to think that I could never be like her?”

She threads her fingers together, “Is it?”

“Galina—”

“Ilya, I can’t answer this for you, you know that.”

He huffs. Fair play. “Fine. I think it’s naive. I think it’s childish.”

“Okay,” she nods, “Why?”

“I hate you.”

“No, you do not. Why?”

He leans forward, mirroring her position, “Because... there is days,” he stops. He was teetering on the edge for real now. There would be no going back. He didn’t even fear that she would hospitalize him, he feared that she would tell Shane before.

~~“Please don’t forget me”~~

“There is days where I think I could do it. More than I did before.”

“What do you—,” she starts but Ilya knows what she’s going to ask.

So he finishes for her, “*Think* about it.”

Galina doesn’t say anything. For the first time in, maybe ever, he feels as though he’s rendered her speechless. He’s sure it’s not true, that she is just picking her next few words very carefully. But the feeling that he had is still there. She takes a breath, grabs her notebook again, and looks at him, “In the event that you do *think* about it,” she mimics his exact intonation. Ilya feels that she’s sniffed out that he’s lying. “What would we do about it?”

Shane was home again.

It was the middle of May. The team had qualified into the playoffs a week ago, meaning they were getting closer and closer to winning another Cup. The house hadn’t felt this lively in a long time, and Ilya. Ilya kind of liked it.

Galina hadn’t asked him if he was suicidal. They had created something that she called a safety plan. Ilya had been so close to just *saying it* that he was sure he was never going to step foot in her office again.

~~“Tell Galina I’m sorry I disappointed her”~~

In reality, he knew he would go back. They had set up another appointment within the week, and all of it was tipping him off that she knew and was just waiting for him to say it. Or maybe she was just going to ask. Maybe she would be the one that had the courage to.

“This place is so fucking amazing,” Wyatt says when he spots Ilya sitting on the back porch of the cottage. Shane had profusely assured Ilya that it was fine if he didn’t want the team to come, assured him it was fine if he wanted to go somewhere else while they partied.

He knew that Shane was just being considerate. But it felt oddly like he was *trying* to get him away.

The *sane* part of Ilya told him that Shane would never do that, so he stayed. He stayed because he wanted to see his friends again.

“~~Tell my friends.....~~”

“It is very calming to be here.”

Wyatt doesn’t say anything.

A handful of minutes later, when Ilya looks at him, he is almost surprised to see Wyatt looking at *him* and not the view. “Cap,” he starts. Panic shoots through Ilya. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” he answered, hoping his voice wasn’t shaking. And if it was, hoped that Wyatt was blaming it on the chill in the air. “Why wouldn’t I be?” Wyatt starts to speak but Ilya stops him, “What, you think I’m jealous you’re gonna win another cup without me?” he laughs, Wyatt smiles but it only freaks Ilya out more.

“Something’s been off about you.”

“I’m alright, Hayes.”

Wyatt is interrupted again when the door opens and Chiron and Anya come tumbling outside playing with each other, Harris close on their heels.

“Anya, blizhe” Ilya says before she has the chance to wander off. It was dark, and he still wasn’t convinced that loons weren’t *real* wolves some days.

“Harris,” Wyatt says to him and Ilya immediately knows. They’ve talked about him.

To their credit, they at least try to ease into it. But, he didn’t want to be caught in the middle of an intervention, one that he didn’t need nor want, so he speaks before they can. “I never told Shane when my mother died.”

He sees the two of them freeze up and fight the urge to look at one another.

“He knows how old I was when she died, he knows how—Hell, everyone knows how.”

“Ily—”

“It is today, you know?”

At that, he hears Wyatt mutter *Shit* under his breath.

“Do not tell him. I do not want him to know.”

Harris puts a hand on his shoulder, “I’m sorry for your loss. I don’t think I’ve ever told you that.” Ilya gives him a tight lipped smile.

When they sit in silence for a long while, Ilya knows that he’s blown their plans out of the water. “It is not that he is not supportive. Never that,” he continues, he doesn’t know why, “It is just... a day for me. It is something I want to have on my own. Something between me and *moya mama*.”

“That makes sense, Cap.”

Ilya snuffles and throws his head back, “Twenty *fucking* years and it did not get any easier.”

~~“There is so much I didn’t say to you.”~~

“Ilya,” Harris starts and Ilya takes a breath, “I’m sorry to do this, especially today, but... But when I asked Shane, he said it was your depression,” he nods, keeping his eyes fixed on the deck, “But it’s been *months*. I’m scared it’s... it’s something *more*.”

He looks up. He looks up and then at Wyatt. He knew what Harris looked like, he knew the look of pity. It was the same one that millions of people had given him when they would bring up his dead mother. He didn’t need to see it on Harris. He wanted to know what his goalie was thinking.

“Wyatt,”

Wyatt takes a swig of his beer, “Shane won’t tell you that he’s worried sick. Hell, he won’t tell any of us. But it’s clear that even he knows something is up.”

Ilya nods and looks back at the floor.

He feels himself start to bounce his leg, he feels himself start to panic.

“Shane has been gone a lot,” he starts, hoping that he was going *somewhere*. “I miss him often.”

~~“I wish I could have told you all of it”~~

He snuffles again, then he stands up, “I appreciate the concern. I’m good. I’m in therapy, we’re getting somewhere. I’m okay.”

“Ilya, are you sure?”

“I’m sure.”

“Alright.”

Galina notices the tension in Ilya’s body. Ever since he had walked in, the boy had been holding his body so tightly that she was afraid he would snap at any second.

A part of her wished that she could tell him that she was as scared as he was for today’s session. That she was terrified that she was going to ruin all they had built together. But, she knew that she couldn’t. If anyone was going to be brave between the two of them, it had to be her. Even if—*Especially* if it was for the both of them.

“It was nice having him at home for a couple days. And it was nice seeing my teammates. Even if they’re...” he trails off.

Galina takes the bait. “Did something happen?”

Ilya perks up, Galina feels that he has something to say even when he shakes his head. So, she waits. It was something she was used to with Ilya. He only needed space to get the courage to say something. He didn’t need her to push him, she just needed to assure that she’ll wait as long as he needs.

“Wyatt and Harris,” he starts. He tells her what happened, what they said, and what he said. She doesn’t miss the omission of what he *felt*, “We are getting somewhere, right?”

Galina couldn’t help but smile softly at his almost childlike expression. She didn’t lie to him when she said, “Yes, I think we are.”

At that exact moment, she sees him break.

It’s so unexpected that Galina is almost glad that he is hiding his face in his hands. She gathers herself, grabs the tissues from behind her—where he had *insisted* to keep them since their first session back because he ‘doesn’t plan on crying’—and slides them across the table beside them.

He doesn’t look up from his hands as he grabs one and holds it in his hands. It doesn’t do much to wipe his tears but she’s glad that he takes the olive branch anyway.

“Ilya...” she says softly when she sees him ease up. He looks up at her, his blue eyes surrounded by a pinkish red from his tears. They were expectant, like he knew what was coming. She supposes he probably does. “If I ask you something, will you promise me you won’t run?”

He snuffles. Slowly, he places his hands in his lap, fingers toying with the tissue in his left hand. With a deep breath, he nods, “I promise.”

She contemplates placing her notebook back on the table. Last time she had, Ilya seemed to have been at least a tad uncomfortable with it. But she also considered that he had told her more than he had in a long time without that ‘barrier’ between them.

She closes her notebook and places it on the table. Ilya's eyes follow it for a second then look back at her.

"Do you have thoughts about killing yourself?"

Ilya sucks in a breath. He's nodding but Galina doesn't react, not until he says it. Not until he admits it verbally. She waits for him to compose himself. He wipes his tears with the tissue and throws it on the table.

With one more deep breath, he looks at her.

"Yes."

Relief washes through Galina.

She can't imagine how it must convey to Ilya.

She was relieved because she could do something about it now. They could work with this. They could work *through* this.

"Okay. Okay, thank you for telling me." He nods softly, she sees his hands shake before he gathers them into fists. "How long have you been having these thoughts, Ilya?"

His knuckles were white, Galina knew it was because he was trying to get himself to stop shaking. "Since I've known or since they started?"

"Is there a different answer?" he nods, "How long has it been since they've started?"

"It was probably a couple weeks before I talked to you about quitting hockey. So a little over a year."

She hums in understanding, "And how long since you've known?"

"Later than that. A couple months," Galina waits, "Maybe August. September."

It was clear to Galina that Ilya hadn't planned on talking about this to her. He was fidgeting, not to mention shaking like a leaf. Galina didn't know how to approach it, she could admit that to herself. There was a lot of possibilities to what he was thinking, to what he was scared of, and he was delicate in this state. One wrong assumption and he would clam up. So, with at least semi-clarity, "Ilya, I can see that you're feeling a lot of things right now," he met her eyes briefly before looking away again. "Do you want to talk me through some of them?"

"I guess I..." he starts immediately then trails off. "I mostly feel guilt right now. For not telling you sooner. I feel like you're thinking 'oh he's known all this time and he didn't tell me', and that makes me... guilty."

"I understand," she nods, he meets her eyes again, briefly. "Do you need me to tell you that I am not thinking that?"

He shakes his head, “I know you’re not. I just *feel* like you are.” He pauses for a second, “It feels like I’m disappointing you just by saying it. By admitting it.”

They look at each other for a little while. Galina realizes that this goes deeper than she initially anticipated, seeing as she assumed that the guilt he had was related to Shane and the other people in her life sure, but it hadn’t quite clicked that it would be so deeply connected to *her* too.

“I understand that, Ilya. And I also understand that you know you’re not,” he nods, approving, “I’d love to talk more about it. But, before we do, would you mind,” she starts, Ilya shifts in his seat. “if I asked you just a few more questions?”

“Um, sure,” he nods.

“Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?”

He sniffs as he shakes his head, “No. I’ve considered it briefly, but no.”

Galina nods softly, threads her fingers together and leans forward. She watches him for a moment, she notices that the tension she’d seen in him just moments before had dissipated and was replaced by what she could only explain as fatigue. “What were the things you considered?”

“Would I do it like my mother did.”

“Would you?”

He shrugs, “I didn’t get that far.”

“Alright, on a scale—”

“Galina, I’m trying really hard,” he interrupts, she leans back, giving him the floor to express himself. “I’m trying *so* fucking hard every day. I don’t want to disappoint people. I don’t want people to resent *me* like I resented my mother for so long but, God, I understand so well why she did it now.” Galina feels her chest get tight, she ignores it. “And it’s... the only thing keeping me going is Shane. It’s only Shane and Anya—God, who’s going to look after Anya?” he says, a pained sob escaping him.

“Oh Ilya.” she barely whispers. “You’re a strong person. I know you well and I know how much you’ve been through.” he looks at her, eyes still hopeful after all, “You’re not weak because of this.”

He nods, “Thank you. For that. I think I needed to hear it.”

She tilts her head, “How seriously have you considered killing yourself? On a scale from zero to ten,”

He grabs a pillow from beside him and places it on his lap. He plays with the edges, his hands shaking so much that Galina’s heart breaks at the sight.

“Five. Six, on a bad day.”

“And how many bad days are there?”

“A lot,” he answers, then clears his throat, “Half of them. Maybe a little less than half.” With another nod, she reaches for her notebook again, “Can—” he stops himself, shaking his head.

“Yes, Ilya?”

“Can you not take that yet?”

She smiles gently, “Of course,” and she folds her hands in her lap again. “I really appreciate you telling me all of this. I know it must be difficult for you.”

“It’s, um, strangely nice. For someone to know.”

She barely contains the laugh that she wants to let out. *Of course it does*, she thinks, *because you want to get better*.

“I saved your number on Shane’s phone when he was here,” he says, “He doesn’t know, but I did it.”

“Good,” she watches as Ilya gathers his legs and sits criss-cross in front of her. She does her best to suppress her smile, but she feels pride for him being able to get comfortable in a moment like this. “I would like to go back to you feeling guilty.”

Ilya sighs, but not apprehensively, more relieved himself, then says, “Please.”

“Shane—”

“I cannot believe you, Rozanov,” he says, Ilya can’t help but flinch. “I want my husband there, can’t you—”

“And I am telling you that I can’t—”

“Yes, you can!”

Ilya blinks back his tears.

The thing about telling your therapist that you want to kill yourself, Ilya had found, is that it makes you *a fucking mess*. He hadn’t felt this unstable in his entire life, but Galina had assured him that it was expected of him. It was proof that he was trying, that he wanted to get better, and that was all Ilya needed to hear.

“I’m doing my best,” he whispered.

He couldn’t tell Shane, he had drawn a hard line with Galina, even if she had seemed less than ecstatic about it. It wasn’t that he was doing it because he *wanted* to. He couldn’t worry Shane. He didn’t need to. He had it under control. As always, Ilya was fine.

“It’s a home game, Ilya. Can you *please* come? I—” Shane stops himself when Ilya shakes his head. “You’re unbelievable. Is there even a reason that you can’t come?”

He wipes his tears with the back of his hand. The truth was that, these days, Ilya could barely get out of bed. He could barely get out of bed, he could barely do the dishes, could barely do the laundry, could barely take Anya out for walks. He didn’t do anything more than what he *had* to do.

“I’m sorry, Shane.”

Shane rubbed his hands over his face, “Okay. Okay.” He repeats, and then he presses a quick peck on Ilya’s cheek.

Before he knows it, Shane’s gone.

Six hours later, he’s raising the Stanley Cup over his head.

Ilya knows he shouldn’t. Ilya knows that nothing good could come of it but he still tunes in to the post-game interviews. He doesn’t even have to look hard to know that Shane was still mad at him, even in the euphoria of being champion. He feels like shit.

“Where is your husband tonight?” the interviewer asks him.

Where Shane would usually laugh, delighted that he can be asked a question like that, he makes a small face of annoyance before masking it, “Rozanov is holding down fort at home,” his voice is clipped, enough to let the interviewer know that he doesn’t want to be asked anything about him again.

He turns the TV off. He wipes his tears away, and he goes to bed.

Three days later, Ilya still hadn’t made amends. He supposed he should’ve, but his body was tired. He was tired, and he didn’t want to spend the night in a club in Ottawa, even if it was with his husband and his friends.

Shane had rolled his eyes, and left without him.

Anya was somewhere in the house, asleep. The only sound reverberating around the home was the TV broadcast. He’s reaching for the remote to turn it off when he hears it.

“With talk of the Hockey Husbands separation, the rumor mill has been working overtime.” he sits up and looks at the screen. “What do you think, Oliver?”

“I think that it was bound to be. With Rozanov’s retirement last year, it seems that this was something we failed to even consider!”

“You really think that Hollander and Rozanov are separated?”

“Yes!” he answers easily, “Why else would he not have been at his husband’s game? It was at home, and it was heavily predicted to be the one to win it for the Centaurs. Not to mention

the clear disdain on Hollander's face when he was asked about his husband—if I can call him that anymore—after the win.”

“Plus, they've not been seen together in months.” the other host adds.

“Fuck,” Ilya says. “*Fuck me,*” he turns the TV off and moves off the couch.

He finds his phone on the kitchen island and dials Shane's number.

“*Shane's phone, he is too busy to come talk to you— What are you doing?*” his own voice—then Shane's—comes through the voicemail note.

He tries not to spiral. He considers calling Svetlana, then remembers she's back in Russie to see her family. He dials Hayes, instead.

“*Wyatt Hayes. Beep.*”

“*Yo, it's Bood. I don't listen to my voicemails, don't waste your time.*”

“*Hey, it's Troy! Leave a message at the tone and I'll call you back!*”

“*Chouinard.*” unintelligible French. “*Beep!*”

“*Harris's phone. I'll give you a call as soon as possible.*”

“*Dykstra's phone. I'll call you back later.*”

“*Luca. Can't come to the phone.*”

Ilya slams his phone down on the island again.

And then, he crumples to the floor.

He had felt his eyes fill with tears at each call that rung through to voicemail. He felt a deep weight on his shoulders. He felt like there was nothing he regretted more than not biting the fucking bullet and gone to that stupid club.

He felt like shit for putting himself first for such a stupid reason.

This was something that Shane had expressed to him was important. This was something that he didn't *need* for Shane to tell him was important, he should just know. This was something that Ilya couldn't see himself being forgiven for. By Shane, maybe, but never by himself.

He reaches above his head for his phone. Through blurry vision, he calls Galina.

He takes a deep breath, he waits for her voicemail. But then, “Ilya?”

His entire body shivers.

“Ilya, are you there?”

A soft sob escapes him.

“Ilya, talk to me. Is something wrong? Talk—” he doesn’t hear the rest of her words as he clicks the End Call button.

Shane feels his phone vibrating again. This time, when he pulls his phone out, he intends to take Ilya’s call. He had felt horrible for even declining his first one, but he was still so... so *upset* with him that he couldn’t see straight. But what he sees on the screen this time is worse. It’s much worse.

It had never been worse, even.

Within ten seconds of seeing ‘Galina (Ilya’s therapist)’ on the screen, he is outside and pressing his phone to his ear. “Hello?”

“Shane.”

“What’s going on? Where’s Ilya? Is he okay?”

“Where are you right now?” she asks, but doesn’t wait for him to reply, almost like she knew that he wouldn’t answer her anyway. “Can you sit down somewhere, please, Shane?”

By some will of nature, he listens and doesn’t panic further. Not yet anyway. There was no way this was good news. “Gali—”

“About four weeks ago, Ilya told me he has thoughts of killing himself.”

Shane is *very* glad that Galina made him sit down.

He feels lightheaded. He feels like he’s going to fucking faint off the bench he was sitting on.

Ilya—

The thoughts stop spiraling when he feels a hand on his shoulder. He looks to his side and sees Wyatt standing next to him. “Um, okay. Okay. Fuck me.”

“He called me just a few moments ago, did not say anything on the phone. I think he is going to attempt to—”

“*Fuck!*” Shane screams, not letting her finish. He gets up and Wyatt, wordlessly seeming to understand that it had gone to absolute *shit*, stabilizes Shane with two hands on his shoulders. “I— Oh my God, he’s going to—”

“Shane, I need you not to panic.”

“Too late for that, I think.”

“How fast can you get to the cottage?” she asks him and Shane looks up at Wyatt. Again, wordlessly, he seems to understand what he needs from him. Wyatt nods and Shane,

suddenly, is very aware of how hard he is shaking. “Is there someone who can drive you?”

“Wyatt—” he uses his shaky hand to wipe at the tears running down his face. He needed to be strong, even though it was looking like it was the last thing he was going to do. “The cottage —”

“Yes. Keys.”

In what feels like a blur later, Shane is in the passenger seat of his car, phone still pressed to his ear, with Wyatt doing 100 on a 40.

“Galina. Please keep talking.”

“About—”

“About Ilya. What is—” he sighs, not being able to say it.

Galina hesitates, but then decides that he should know, “We have been working on his suicidal thoughts in therapy. I thought it was going alright, Ilya had been showing signs of getting better. It’s a slippery slope, so I should’ve been more careful.”

“Galina, *please*.”

“He missed our most recent session and that’s around when I started worrying.” Shane doesn’t think about how he had no idea Ilya missed a session with Galina. He didn’t want to think about how, if he missed that, there was surely other signs he had missed.

“I’m such a shit husband,” he puts his hand over his eyes.

“Don’t say that,” Wyatt says from the driver’s seat.

“I didn’t notice. I didn’t notice anything,” he hears Galina take a breath, preparing to say something, but he stops her, “I mean... *Shit*.” He shakes his head, not like he hadn’t been shaking like crazy ever since Galina told him that his husband was miles away *killing himself*. “I didn’t want to admit it maybe. That there was something wrong. That there *could* be something wrong.”

“It’s normal, Shane. Of course you didn’t immediately jump to that. I don’t think anyone would.”

Shane doesn’t say anything.

She was right, he had a feeling she was. But it all didn’t make him feel any better anyway.

“He has to be okay.”

Galina hums, “He will be.”

“You don’t know that!” he can’t help but shout. He feels bad immediately. Galina was just as helpless as he was. Wyatt changed into a higher gear, driving the car even faster. “You don’t

know if he's—"

"I do. I do, Shane, because he's going to do what his mother did."

He falters, "He really thought about this."

"I had no real indication that he was going to do it, Shane, I would've told you otherwise. You were his entire safety plan in the event of this happening. You were the only thing keeping him going at every turn."

His tears hadn't stop falling. He couldn't stop himself from imagining walking into their house and finding him gone. *Dead*. "I can't lose him," he says, almost like he was realizing it for the first time, "I can't lose him when I barely fucking got to have him."

"Shane..." Wyatt's voice is so pained that it makes him cry even harder. Galina is silent on the other end of the phone.

He knew what it was now.

It was a race against time. They just had to figure out if they were going to win it or not.

"You would expect a team who has just won their second Stanley Cup in a row to be drinking their way through every club in Ottawa, Cindy."

"You would, Jack, that is what's happened for basically every team that has won that Cup. But this much isn't true for the Ottawa Centaurs. The team won their second Cup in a row just a few weeks ago and besides one appearance within the week of being crowned champion, no one in the team has been spotted."

"It really makes you think," Jack turns to Cindy, "With their win, come a slew of allegations that the nicknamed Hockey Husbands, Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov had separated, or even divorced, and now this? It makes you think what really is going on behind the scenes."

"Would you suggest that the team's absence has to do with the alleged separation?"

"There truly is nothing else to go off of, Cindy."

"Lyubov' vsej moyey zhizni,

When Shane reached the town where their cottage was, he told Wyatt to call 911.

I should start this by saying sorry to you. I am sorry. I never wanted to make you worry, I never wanted to make you hurt. You're probably very angry with me. I understand, I would be too (maybe more than you) but you have to understand something.

It's not your fault.

It never was.

I started to think at the end (funny to think it like that) that there was nothing anyone could do to stop this. Maybe that is the depression talking. But just know, there is nothing that could have stopped me. Don't feel bad that you couldn't.

Shane had always heard people describe it as autopilot. He had no idea what that could feel like until he was holding Ilya's unconscious body in his lap and praying to a God he wasn't sure he believed in that the ambulance would get there in time.

Please, moy lyubimyy. I would hate myself more than I already do for leaving you. You gave me the best years of my life, and for that I will forever be grateful. I'm sorry I couldn't give you more. I'm sorry that I didn't tell you I loved you more often. I'm sorry that I didn't tell you just how happy I was to have you in my life, to get to call you my husband, to tell you just how much I appreciate everything you did for me.

I hope you know. and I hope you can forgive me for not telling you enough, if you can't forgive me for nothing else.

Tell Anya that I love her. Don't let her visit me too often, I want her to get used to being without me. Remind her every day that she was the best dog I could've ever asked for.

He hoped that Anya would be fine with Wyatt as he watched their cottage get smaller and smaller from the window of the ambulance. His ears were ringing from the sirens.

Tell the team they are the best team I could have asked for and that I love all of them so much. Harris, too, even though to me his is very much part of the team (tell him I said that). Win more Cups. All the fucking Cups.

He hoped that the rest of the team wasn't worried, that they would only figure he left to go home to Ilya, that they were fine and Ilya was fine.

Tell Cliff not too miss me too much. Learn to be a wingman for him, maybe you'll be better than I ever was.

Tell Hunter I love that old man. Thank him for being so brave.

Tell Hayden to take care of you, and not let you say no when he tries to. Tell him sorry for how much of an asshole I always was to him. He only deserved it a little.

Tell Galina. Call her, tell her, say I'm sorry. Tell her how grateful I am for everything she did for me. Tell her she definitely is the best therapist in Ottawa, even if she couldn't save me. She is the best because she tried, and that is more than a lot of people could say.

He wanted to pick his phone up and thank Galina. He wanted to thank her for acting so quickly. For being there for Ilya, for him, for making sure that he at least had a chance to survive.

Tell Rose that she was one of the best people I knew. She helped you when you needed it, and because of her I got to call you my boyfriend, my husband, the love of my life in

front of the entire fucking world. I am eternally grateful for the things she did for you, and for me.

Tell Svetlana I know. Tell her I know she's mad at me. I know that she is going to kick my ass in whatever afterlife we go to. Tell her she is my favorite person in the world (don't tell her it's after you, though, she already knows). She is the only reason I kept going for a long time. She is the reason for a lot of my happiness. Please, never let her forget that. Never let her forget she is mad at me either. I deserve it. Tell her I love her one last time.

He hadn't even considered Svetlana. He realized that she was the only person in the world that could understand him. He realized that he was most scared of telling her. He realized that he had to focus on his breathing, otherwise he would forget to do it.

Shane. Shane, Shane, Shane. Please keep living your life, okay? Promise me. I will be very angry if you don't.

I love you. Ya tebya lyublyu. Je t'aime.

Je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime.

Ilya."

God, he hoped that Ilya would survive.

Shane had been playing hockey since he was a child. It was in his blood. He had spent countless days with his skates on and his hockey stick in hand practically from sunup to sundown. He knew what feeling sore was like.

He had never felt worse than he did after sleeping in a chair in a hospital room for almost a week.

The team had come and gone. So had Hayden and Marleau.

Svetlana had flown in from Russia within two hours of Shane calling her to let her know. She also spent most nights in the hospital with Shane—she had been just as mad as Ilya had predicted in his letter, but she had pushed through and still stayed for him.

Everyone who came to see them, they all had begged him to go home, to get rest, offered to stay with Ilya while he slept. But he couldn't imagine being anywhere but next to his husband. Not when he was still on IV drip after IV drip to flush his system of the drugs he had taken. The drugs he had taken in hopes that he wouldn't wake up from them.

Shane still felt like he was floating. He still couldn't believe he was so close to losing his husband. To losing Ilya. He couldn't wrap his head around it, he didn't know if he ever *would*.

"Good morning, Shane."

He shifted in his seat, standing up with a rush of pain, “Galina. Good morning.”

“The doctors say he’s doing better,” she says, Shane’s eyes fill with tears. She gently motions for him to sit down, and he does, “Is he still not talking to you?”

Shane shakes his head, reaching his hand out to hold Ilya’s. In his slumber, Ilya twists his hand and holds Shane’s.

The morning after being admitted, Ilya had woken up. Shane had taken his face in his hands as Ilya cried. He had wiped his tears. He had assured Ilya that he wasn’t angry, like he had assumed he would be in his letter, he had told Ilya that he would never let it happen again.

He told him he loved him, over, and over, and over, and over again.

And Ilya.

Ilya had said nothing. He hadn’t said anything in days.

Shane didn’t know what to make of it, but he knew that he wouldn’t leave him alone for even a second.

“He has talked to the others,” he tells her. Galina tilts her head, Shane feels her invitation to keep talking and something about her, he does, “When I left. He only talks when I’m not here.”

The team had indefinitely paused on the Cup celebrations out of respect, expressing that it was wrong of them to even consider doing so when Ilya was admitted in the hospital, and Shane was glued to his side. Each of them took turns visiting in the hospital, giving him updates on the gossip which hadn’t changed much since the night they won the Cup. The PR team had reached out to him asking if he wants to put out a statement defusing the rumors that he and Ilya were divorced but he had bigger priorities.

“What does he say?”

He shrugs, “Not much. He answers their questions about how he feels, no one really asks him anything else.” He looks at his husband, “I can imagine it’s a little tiring for him too. People only talking to him about how he tried killing himself.”

Galina purses her lips to the side, “It’s a side effect of, you know. Trying to kill yourself.”

Shane laughs for real then. It felt wrong to do so, but the entire situation was just so fucking ridiculous. He closes his eyes for a moment, then looks at Galina again, “Thank you.”

She nods.

“Really, I mean it. Thank you, Galina, for that night. You’re the only reason he’s here right now,” he says, moving his attention to the beeping in the room, indicating his heartbeat. A sound that he had been hearing for eight days, a sound he could hear for the rest of his life if it meant he knew that his husband was alive.

“There is no need to thank me, Shane.”

He felt his hands start to shake. She had the same accent as Ilya. He yearned to hear his stupid voice says his stupid name.

Galina walks out a few moments later, probably sensing that he needed to be alone.

When he feels Ilya’s hand move away from his, he knows that he has woken up. Shane looks at Ilya who had already been staring at him. “Good morning, sleepyhead.”

Ilya looks away and out the window at the bright blue sky. Then he looks up at the machine’s beeping above him, at the IV drip attached to his arm.

“Doctors said they’re going to do a tox screen after that IV finishes. It’s probably your last one before they can move on with the rest of procedure.”

Ilya squeezes his eyes shut.

Then he opens them and looks at Shane. It was the first time in days he had looked at Shane for a reason other than getting him to shut up. Shane feels himself start to shake again.

“I don’t know what’s going to happen, Ilya. I would tell you if I did,” Ilya nods at that, “What I do know,” he walks closer, forces Ilya to let him hold his hand, “is that I’m not going anywhere. Do you hear me?”

Ilya’s eyes were full of emotion. Shane was sure that his heartbeat was through the roof. “We’re going to get through this together. I promise.”

The look on Ilya’s face almost makes Shane think he said the wrong thing. It almost makes him think that it wasn’t something Ilya wanted.

He feels disappointment rush through him when Ilya lets go of his hand.

Then, Ilya moves to the side, creating space for Shane to lay down next to him. Shane doesn’t even try to hold back his tears as he climbs in bed and pulls Ilya into his arms. “I can’t believe I almost lost you, sweetheart.” Shane whispers into his hair, Ilya’s head resting on his chest. “I can’t believe I had to read your suicide letter. I can’t...” he snuffles, “Ilya,” Shane moves his golden curls away from his face. “Say something.”

Shane holds him tighter.

But Ilya doesn’t say anything.

End Notes

THERE IS GOING TO BE A SECOND FIC

i planned it in tandem with planning THIS fic so it's going to be fine. i'm going to fix it. i'm going to force them into couple's therapy, they will come out stronger and better. we love to see it. DON'T YELL AT ME IT HURTS ME TOO

also another thank u to my irl for peer reviewing the therapy scenes lol. maybe those three years of majoring in psych together taught us something after all lol

see u next fic!!!

catch me on tumblr until then ? [@darlinghollanov](#)

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