

these are the memories i keep

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these are the memories i keep

by [bluerosebouquet](#)

Summary

“You’re being difficult.”

“I am not being difficult, Hollander, you are the one being difficult and annoying.”

“I just don’t see what the big deal is,” Shane had his phone pressed between his ear and his shoulder as he moved around his kitchen, making breakfast, “It’s not like it’s some kind of classified information.”

“Is just not important,” Ilya said evasively, and Shane could hear the sound of his fridge opening on the other end.

“I think your birthday is very important,” Shane said stubbornly, setting his glass down a little harder than he meant to, so that it clacked against the countertop, “I don’t know why you’re acting like this about it.”

Notes

Thank you my beloved Erin for prompting me with this idea. Of course it took a life of its own lol

Once again I am taking a LOT of creative liberties about hockey and how their season works. As a sports fan and a perfectionist this pains me, but as a hollanov fucking in every way possible truther I must persist.

Title comes from [this song](#)

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

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“I am not being difficult, Hollander, you are the one being difficult and annoying.”

“I just don’t see what the big deal is,” Shane had his phone pressed between his ear and his shoulder as he moved around his kitchen, making breakfast, “It’s not like it’s some kind of classified information.”

“Is just not important,” Ilya said evasively, and Shane could hear the sound of his fridge opening on the other end.

It was a nice feeling, that they were making breakfast in tandem, even in cities hundreds of miles away from one another.

“I think your birthday is very important,” Shane said stubbornly, setting his glass down a little harder than he meant to, so that it clacked against the countertop, “I don’t know why you’re acting like this about it.”

Shane had been trying to get the date out of Ilya for weeks now. He had begged, pleaded, gotten huffy, angry, and even brought it up in the middle of phone sex the night before, but Ilya had not budged.

He continued with his constant refrain of “is not important, Hollander,” and moved on before Shane could even try to come up with a counter argument.

“I don’t see why it matters,” Ilya said for the thousandth time, and he sounded impatient, “Can we talk about something else, please?”

Shane sighed in an overdramatic way.

“Fine, when’s your game, this afternoon?”

“Yes,” he could hear the smile in Ilya’s voice at his tone, which was halfway between conciliatory and petulant, “Then we go to Los Angeles.”

“Good weather.”

“You want to talk to me about weather?”

“I’m just making conversation,” Shane shrugged his shoulders even though he knew Ilya couldn’t see him, “Since we aren’t talking about the elephant in the room.”

Ilya snorted in a derisive sort of way, but didn’t deign to start the argument up again.

“Are you at home this weekend?”

Shane pouted, but was too eager to continue talking to Ilya to let the conversation fizzle out.

“Yeah, then we go to Buffalo.”

“Ah, your favorite.”

“Shut up.”

They fell into an relaxed silence. Shane could hear Ilya clattering around in his kitchen, and the pops and sizzles from a pan on the stove.

“What are you cooking?”

“Eggs,” Ilya’s voice was warm like a crackling fire on an icy cold day. It filled Shane up to the tips of his toes. “And bacon and waffles and toast.”

“Jesus. You leave any food for the rest of Boston?”

He laughed, easy and loud, and Shane ached all over. He wanted to be there with him, in his pretty house and in his soft bed.

“What are you eating? Wait, do not tell me. Your stupid smoothie?”

“My smoothie is very healthy,” Shane said with dignity, “It’s all part of my macrobiotic diet.”

“Sounds boring. Very you.”

“Fuck you.”

“I would like to do that to you, if you were here.”

Shane felt himself flushing, and he knew that Ilya knew that he was flushing, which made Shane feel exposed in an odd sort of way.

“Eat your breakfast, Rozanov.”

“Hmm, drink your gross smoothie, Hollander.”

It was tender, bordering on domestic, and made Shane feel soft around his stomach.

But he just couldn’t let the birthday thing go.

“You’re upset because he won’t tell you his birthday?” Rose asked him, three weeks after his conversation with Ilya. Montreal was playing New York that night, and she happened to be shooting a new terrible movie there. Shane had snuck away to have dinner with her at an upscale little Italian place in Brooklyn.

“It’s not just that- It’s that- It’s such a simple thing. And I could like, send something to him or something. Just like- A way to be connected without actually being there. But he’s being so weird about it.”

He liked being able to talk to someone about Ilya. It was a little strange, to have someone know about something that had been so secret for so long, but he liked talking about him. So much so that he thought that one day he might start and never stop.

She had figured it out herself when Shane had mentioned him offhandedly one too many times, and confronted Shane with the truth when she had flown up to Montreal for a couple of playoff games the year before.

Shane had been terrified, but Rose had, as usual, been painfully understanding, and had opened the door for him to talk about it if he wanted to.

And *god*, he had wanted to.

“You want me to try and figure it out?” Rose asked, breaking him out of his thoughts, waggling her eyebrows in a way that made Shane snort with laughter, “I have people for these things.”

“You make it sound like you’re an international spy or something,” he pointed his fork at her, “I guess I could figure it out, I just want him to- Tell me.”

“And he hasn’t said anything about why he *doesn’t* want to tell you?”

“No!” he threw up his hands indignantly, “And I know some people don’t like turning a year older or whatever, but I just wanted to- I don’t know, do something for him.”

“I’m sure if you wanted to find out you could,” she said thoughtfully, resting her chin on her palm. She was looking very pretty, with her hair tied back and in a loose fitting t shirt and jeans. “But I would think that might make things worse.”

“I don’t know,” Shane lamented, anxiety bubbling in his gut, so that he was just pushing his very good, very expensive pasta around on his plate, “I think it probably would but- I don’t think he has anyone to surprise him.”

“It is a pretty grand romantic gesture.”

“I don’t know what to do,” he confessed, “I should just listen to him and drop it but- I don’t know, I just can’t.”

“You love your birthday though,” she pointed out, still looking thoughtful, “Maybe he just doesn’t want to be reminded of it.”

“Yeah, you’re right,” Shane said, and resolved to drop it, move on, and try not to be bothered by the fact that Ilya didn’t want him to know this simple, personal thing about him.

It was fate how he found out. Really, it was.

He hadn’t gone looking for the information, it had literally fallen in his lap.

A few weeks after his dinner with Rose, Shane had been invited to a Christmas party at Hayden’s house. Most of the team was there, and the place was packed with friends and wives and girlfriends and kids. Shane was uncomfortable; it was overly noisy and hot inside the kitchen, and the cacophony of sound pressed in on him, so he felt like he was being slowly suffocated.

He squeezed his way through the crowd, smiling around at everyone that met his eyes, and finally made it onto the deck outside, and breathed in lungfuls of cold December air in relief.

The deck was well-decorated with comfortable seating and hanging lights crisscrossing their way out into the large yard. Several people were watching their children sprinting around in circles, laughing uproariously and chasing one another.

Shane leaned against the deck railing, clutching the beer that Hayden had pressed into his hand the moment he arrived, and listened to the muted sounds of conversation at the fire pit next to him, and the sounds of shrieking laughter of the children below, allowing the knot inside his chest to relax by degrees as the cold air cooled his heated face.

What are you doing?

He sent the text without thinking, mostly for something to do than anything else. He didn't really expect him to respond to him.

But his phone had vibrated in his hand before he had even managed to get it into his pocket.

Just finished practice. You?

He smiled and wished, not for the first time, that Ilya was standing here with him. He loved his team, loved their families, loved Hayden's house, but sometimes it felt a little lonely to always show up to these things alone. Especially when the person he'd like to bring was always a topic of conversation for the team, so he couldn't forget him even if he wanted to.

At a party at Hayden's house.

Gross.

It's not! It's a team party. Everyone's here.

And yet you're texting me.

I guess so.

I really wish you were here, he typed out, before deleting it quickly. That would be way too much.

How was practice? he said instead.

You're not going to get any information about my Cup winning team out of me, Hollander, came Ilya's immediate reply, *No matter how good your mouth is.*

Shane grinned, setting his beer on the railing next to him.

You've always said it was very good though.

The best, Ilya said, and Shane closed his eyes, trying to picture him. Was he lying on his couch? On his bed? Had he eaten dinner? Was he wearing the soft black sweatpants that

Shane knew he was partial to? Did he have a fire going? Crackling lowly as he watched hockey on mute? Was he smiling as he texted him?

Did he miss Shane the way Shane missed him?

I think I could get information out of you if I wanted to.

No chance, I can resist your charms.

My charms?

Your mouth and other things.

Shane blushed, thankful for the winter darkness around him to hide it. Even so, he glanced around to make sure no one was watching him. Fortunately, they were all wrapped up in their own conversations to pay their captain any mind.

You're disgusting.

You like it.

He did, more every passing second. He liked it so much it scared the hell out of him.

Before he could come up with a satisfactory reply, the sound of Ilya's name made him look up.

"Oh Rozanov? He is such a Sag!"

One of the women around the fire pit, who Shane thought he recognized as JJ's newish girlfriend, was talking animatedly to the rest of the group, JJ's heavy arm wrapped around her shoulders.

"How do you even know when his birthday is?" JJ asked, but he pressed a genial kiss to her face all the same.

"Oh come on, all your birthdays are listed on the MLH website," she said, sounding impatient, "And we were talking about it, so I looked it up. He was born on December 20, so he's a Sag."

"I don't even know why you're looking up Ilya Rozanov, when you should be loyal to the Metros."

"We look up all the hot players' birthdays," another woman piped up, and the others roared with laughter, "Don't take it personally, JJ."

Shane turned away, his heart pounding in his chest.

December 20.

Ilya's birthday was December 20.

And Shane knew it.

Later that night, alone in his apartment, Shane paced back and forth, back and forth in front of the fireplace, his socked feet silent against the wood of the floors.

He probably should just pretend like he didn't know it, especially since Ilya hadn't actually told him.

He may not want to even celebrate his birthday, or be reminded it was happening at all.

Sighing, he pulled out his phone, and tried to pretend like he was only checking the Metros' team schedule because he wanted to watch highlights of their opponent that weekend.

And he just happened to see that they had a bye on December 19th and 20th.

And just happened to look at Boston's schedule to see that they were playing at home.

"Fuck," Shane muttered, it would have been so much easier if one of them had been playing away. Because now, the idea had planted itself in his mind, and he didn't know if he was a strong enough person to ignore it.

Ilya would probably be mad at him for finding out his birthday without Ilya telling him, he told himself firmly, even as he looked at flights on December 20th.

He might even have other plans, ones that Shane had no right to know about. It was best to leave it alone, maybe make a joke about it after the fact.

Shane booked the flight that night.

"Where exactly are you going?" Hayden posed the question to him at the end of the night on the 18th. They had just destroyed Philadelphia as usual, and the locker room was full of boisterous chatter, everyone looking forward to a precious weekend off.

"I told you already," Shane didn't meet his eyes as he packed his stuff away, "I'm flying down to New York to see Rose for a day or two."

"It's weird that you're such good friends with your ex," Hayden observed, still watching him in an uncharacteristically shrewd kind of way. It made Shane's insides squirm. He hated lying, especially in such an open way. He told himself it was different with Ilya because he was, mostly, lying by omission.

"It's not weird, just because all your exes hate you doesn't mean mine have to hate me."

JJ snorted with laughter, and Hayden's expression cleared, his eyebrows lifting as he snapped back a retort with no heat behind it.

Safely ensconced in his apartment half an hour later, Shane packed his clothes carefully in an overnight bag, folding them over and over again until they fit perfectly inside, so they wouldn't get a single wrinkle.

He hugged himself as he looked around, trying to find something to distract his brain from what he was about to do. He had never been an impulsive person; he preferred to plan things out in advance, know what he was getting into before he actually did it. Actually that wasn't true, he preferred to make up scenarios of every outcome in his head, so at least he was prepared if things went wrong.

So this...all of this, was out of his wheelhouse in a big way.

Maybe he should just cancel, he reasoned to himself, staring out across the city, glittering below him. It's not like anyone would know. He could stay holed up in his apartment, or tell Hayden Rose had to cancel, or detour to New York instead, just wander around the city.

But he wanted to see Ilya. He *wanted* to surprise him. He wanted to curl up with him on his couch, not watching whatever game was on.

He wanted to kiss him, almost as much as he wanted to win another Cup.

There were some times where he maybe wanted to kiss him more than he wanted to win another Cup, usually when his hand was wrapped around his cock, and Ilya's name was in his mouth, soft and sweet, like he was begging for something from someone hundreds of miles away.

Shane didn't sleep well that night. He tossed and turned, unable to get comfortable. His heart was racing in his chest, even though he was just lying in bed, and he felt almost feverish. His hands and feet were icy cold, while his face burned.

His body seemed to think he was facing the guillotine instead of a short flight to Boston the next day.

He was determined to see this through however, so when his alarm went off in the morning, he splashed his face with icy water in the bathroom sink, and tried to think about other things, and not what was coming.

His flight was later in the evening, so he went about his usual routine, trying to enjoy one of his few days off in the season. He had his smoothie, went to the gym, called his parents, and did everything he could to ignore the pit that had settled in his chest.

When the time came, Shane didn't go straight to the airport. He stopped first at a little bakery that Ilya had mentioned seeing from the team bus the last time he was in town.

Predictably, right after he had finished giving Shane the best blowjob of his life.

"Have you been there?" he had said, even as he kissed Shane's bare stomach, which was still heaving for breath.

"Once or twice, it's famous," Shane managed, one hand still tangled in Ilya's hair, "Mostly to get something for somebody's birthday. Their Chantilly cake is amazing."

"I want a Chantilly cake," Ilya pouted, "Hollander, next time I beat you in Montreal you have to get me one."

“Oh, I’m getting you a cake for beating me?”

“Yes, as a thank you for making you play your best.”

Shane had laughed, but the idea had taken hold, and Shane hadn’t been able to get it out of his head from the moment he booked his flight.

He stepped inside the little shop, breathing in the warm, cinnamon-scented air, and smiling awkwardly at the woman behind the counter, dressed in a pink apron flecked with flour.

“Do you-” he cleared his throat, “Do you have any Chantilly cakes left?”

“Let me check,” she said brightly, bending down to check behind the counter, so that she disappeared from Shane’s view for a few seconds, “Yes! Just one left.”

“I’ll take it,” he said, relieved and, five minutes later, he was walking out of the bakery and back into the bitterly cold December air, holding the white box as though it were made of spun glass.

Shane arrived to the airport a full three hours before his seven o’clock flight, anxious about the pre-holiday travel, but the Montreal airport was nearly deserted, and he ended up sitting at his gate with the little box in his lap, his leg bouncing rapidly, and with nothing to occupy his thoughts other than scenarios of Ilya throwing Shane out of his house.

He knew he was being overdramatic, but knowing and being able to stop himself from thinking this way were very different things.

Finally, they called his flight to begin boarding, and Shane settled himself into a well-earned first class seat, grateful to the very nice flight attendant who let him place his cake in the empty seat next to him.

What if it was all fucked up and melted by the time he got to Ilya?

No, it was fine. It was going to be fine.

Shane liked flying, in spite of it all. He liked having a window seat, and he liked the feeling of the plane accelerating and taking off, watching the city fading into a spiderweb of lights, soon replaced by nothing but pitch darkness. It relaxed him, in a strange way.

Unfortunately for him, the flight was very short, and the captain had barely announced they had reached cruising altitude before she was back, telling them they were making their descent into Boston.

Shane looked out the window again, watching the mass of lights getting closer and closer, until he could distinguish houses and cars.

They landed smoothly at half past eight, and Shane tried to keep himself together, even though he felt a pressure at the top of his throat, like he might throw up. Ignoring this, he made his way through the Boston airport, keeping his head as low as possible, and followed

the signs for rideshare, settling himself in the back of an Infiniti to make the journey to Ilya's house.

Or well, a little ways from Ilya's house.

He walked along the quiet sidewalk, his overnight bag on his shoulder, and the box of cake still in his hands. He had kept an eye on Boston's game in the car, and was relieved to see that they had won, with a hat trick for Ilya. Hopefully that would mean he was in a good, and potentially forgiving, mood.

He let himself into the gate, closing it quietly behind him. He knew Ilya would probably be another forty five minutes or so. He'd have to talk to the media, go back to the locker room, change, and then get in one of his many too-expensive cars before coming back here.

Shane shivered against the cold, and input the code Ilya had given him to the front door, stepping inside the dark, quiet house.

He elected not to flip on any lights. One, because he didn't want Ilya to think someone was robbing him when he got home and two, it felt strange to treat this place like it was his, even though he was starting to know it better than almost anywhere. He leaned against the end of the kitchen island, setting the cake down next to him, and staring out onto the moonlit yard.

Shane's feet tapped against the floor as he waited. He was nervous, so anxious that he felt every painful thump of his heart throughout his entire body, his hands and feet freezing while his face burned.

What if he had plans or was bringing someone home or something? What if he didn't come back tonight at all?

What if he was angry at Shane for coming down here without telling him? Or upset that he had figured out when his birthday was?

The minutes ticked by slowly, until he finally heard a car pulling into the garage, and the sound of distant movement. He held his breath, waiting.

The small beeping of the keypad, the click of the door, and suddenly Shane had no clue how to even make himself known.

This was a bad idea, he shouldn't have come.

Before Shane could make up his mind to do anything, Ilya was flipping on the kitchen light, and jumping out of his skin when he saw Shane, cursing in Russian.

He looked good, even when he was terrified. He was wearing a green beanie and a heather grey hoodie with a jacket that zipped up the front. Shane's heartbeat sped up just looking at him.

"Hollander," he put a hand over his chest, panting for breath, "What- What the fuck are you doing-"

“Happy birthday,” Shane said awkwardly, holding his arms out a little from his body.

Ilya said nothing, just stared at him like he had never seen him before.

Instantly, Shane was on edge. He had been right, he shouldn’t have come.

He fought to keep his voice level as he continued,

“I got you this,” he pushed the box forward, “I know you talked about that dessert place in Montreal so I thought- I just-”

Still Ilya said nothing.

Shane was going to die of embarrassment. He couldn’t believe he had done this. Of course Ilya didn’t want him there, he had made it clear he didn’t want Shane to know when his birthday was, and Shane had gone and meddled and now was in his house after a game with a fucking cake.

“I-” he had no idea how to even begin to backtrack, “Anyway! I’ll go but- But happy birthday and- Good- Good game. I- sorry about this, I just- Yeah.”

Shane made a move to the door, trying to decide whether he should lay down in traffic after this, when Ilya seemed to come back to himself. He made a sudden, compulsive movement towards him, his hand outstretched. He touched Shane’s wrist, and the contact ground them both to a halt.

They stared at one another, each of them breathing hard, before finally, *finally*, Ilya spoke,

“You’re here,” he said simply, his voice a little rough.

“Yeah I-” he swallowed, looking away, “I wanted to surprise you.”

“I thought you had a game.”

“No, we have weekend off,” Shane cut his eyes to him, trying to determine how angry he was, “I probably- Should have called.”

“You brought me a birthday cake,” Ilya still sounded odd, and Shane’s insides shriveled.

“It just- I thought you might want- A cake or something.”

Ilya’s eyes were roving all over his face, and Shane braced himself for the inevitable blow of rejection.

Instead, Ilya was yanking Shane forward, and kissing him deeply. He kissed him like he needed Shane to breathe, and bent him back so that he was nearly lying across the kitchen island.

Shane wrapped his legs around Ilya’s waist, sighing into his mouth, and relaxing more than he had in weeks.

It took nothing for him to relax when he was with Ilya.

Ilya kissed him and kissed him and kissed him, his lips all over Shane's face, down his neck, his strong, warm hands working up under his t shirt.

Shane moaned, the sound echoing across the kitchen, and Ilya groaned in turn, grinding their hips together. His hands moved down to Shane's thighs, and he hooked them underneath, lifting him up and carrying him to the bedroom, slowly and carefully, so neither of them fell.

Within minutes, Shane was naked on his bed, panting for breath as Ilya worked him open.

"God," he buried his face in Ilya's soft pillows, "Fuck me."

"Okay," he looked down to see Ilya grinning, his teeth reflecting the low light of the bedroom, "If you're sure."

"Wait," he reached out a hand, and Ilya stopped immediately, looking down at him, nearly concerned, "Can I-"

He flushed, looking away. It was silly, to still be embarrassed to say the words when he and Ilya had been doing this for years. Fortunately, Ilya took pity on him, and scooted back until he was standing at the end of the bed, looking like the kind of creature that men had once thrown themselves into the roiling Aegean Sea for.

"Come here, Hollander," his voice was low and sinful, and Shane's mouth was watering already, "Come here and suck my cock, I know you want to."

Shane made a pathetic, hitched little noise, and crawled forward. He took Ilya's cock in his hand, spitting on the head before swirling it around with his tongue, savoring the taste and the noise he made, his hand coming up to fist in Shane's hair.

"So good at this," Ilya murmured, his blunt nails scratching Shane's scalp, and he felt like he was melting into the mattress, and the only real thing in the world were Ilya's hands and Ilya's noises, and Ilya's cock; Shane only existed for this, for him.

He took him farther down his throat, relaxing as much as he could, even as his cock slid down past his uvula. Ilya's eyes widened in surprise and he moaned brokenly as he felt Shane swallow around him.

"Fuck Hollander, so fucking perfect for me, huh?"

Shane's eyes fluttered at his words, and he bobbed up and down, willing Ilya to start fucking his throat. He wanted to disappear into him, float away from everything else, be used by Ilya until there was nothing left of him.

Ilya's hand tightened on the back of his hair, and he moved his hips forward, just as Shane wanted him to. He wanted to be nothing more than a vessel for Ilya's pleasure, eliciting those perfect, rough sounds from deep in his chest.

“Fuck,” Ilya eased himself out of Shane’s mouth a moment later, the tendons in his neck standing out as he clenched his jaw, “Your mouth is *perfect*.”

Shane whined, his mouth still open, a string of saliva falling from it, and Ilya smiled, wiping it away gently before guiding him back onto the pillows.

“Think you can take me?” Ilya’s fingers skated up the underside of Shane’s cock, and his whole body twitched, a tortured groan slipping out of his mouth, “Hm? Use your words.”

“Yeah,” his voice was slightly hoarse, and he saw Ilya’s pupils dilate at the sound of it, “*Please*.”

“Love when you beg,” his voice was thick and rich and Shane wanted to drown in him, “Need to make you do it more.”

“Please,” Shane repeated, willing to say anything to him to get him where Shane wanted him most, “Please, Ilya.”

“Fuck,” he kissed him again, their tongues sliding together, tasting his own precum in Shane’s mouth, and he pushed into him slowly, so slowly that it felt like the room was spinning. Shane’s fingers curled into one of the pillows as Ilya thrust into him, and his heart was beating so fast that he thought it might give out.

“Harder,” he managed, even as the angle of Ilya’s cock inside him made him feel like heaven and earth were crashing together all at once. Ilya chuckled, but did not do as Shane asked.

“Not tonight,” Ilya kissed his neck, grazing his teeth along the tendons there, “I want it slow tonight.”

Shane started to whine in protest, but the angle of Ilya’s next slow, measured thrust was so perfect that it melted into a broken moan, and his hands came up to rake down Ilya’s back.

“Yeah?” he pressed a hot, open mouthed kiss to Shane’s pectoral, “You like it slow?”

It felt like every particle of Shane’s body was vibrating.

“Please,” he said again, not even knowing what he was asking for.

But Ilya kept up his torturous tempo, until Shane was so close to coming that it was making his head swim.

“Think you can come for me?” Ilya’s voice was very far away, so that Shane had to concentrate to understand what he was saying.

Honestly, Shane didn’t know, he felt so close and simultaneously so far away from the edge that he didn’t know what way was up.

He couldn’t form words, but made a noise that was somewhere between a moan and a sigh.

“I go harder now, okay?” he felt Ilya’s hand in his hair again, “You’ve done so well, Shane, you deserve to come and make me come.”

Shane hummed, arching up involuntarily.

“So good,” Ilya murmured, and immediately picked up the pace. At once, it felt like electricity was zapping through every cell of Shane’s body. It was almost too much, but Ilya’s warm hands grounded him, and he wanted to please him, make him feel good.

“Fuck, Hollander, are you-”

“Yes,” Shane sighed, feeling Ilya’s lips on his skin, and right there right there right there-

He came hard, untouched, all over himself, and Ilya toppled right after him, groaning and pressing his forehead into Shane’s shoulder, Shane’s cum smearing all over their stomachs.

They lay together, panting, clutching each other like a life raft in a storm.

Shane felt a million miles away, in that dreamlike state that he wanted to live in all the time, the one that he only ever felt when he was with Ilya.

He felt cold the moment that Ilya pulled out of him, but he was back within seconds, a warm cloth cleaning him up, before Ilya was back, pulling him closer, and pressing his lips into his hair.

They stayed that way for a while, until Shane had come back to himself enough to speak at last,

“I’m sorry I found out when your birthday was,” he said, in a small voice, curling closer to him as he spoke, “I know I should have left it alone but-”

“I’ve never celebrated my birthday really, since it is during the season,” Ilya said, cutting across him. Shane looked up at him; he was staring straight ahead, towards the opposite wall of the bedroom, and speaking like the words were coming from a well deep within him, one that he had never thought to dredge from. “Even as- When I was younger. My mother would do her best but- Most days I was at practice or at a game. There wasn’t time for it. So I just got used to not celebrating it. And then I just didn’t want to.”

He paused, and Shane felt his throat tighten. He really had put him in a terrible position by just showing up here.

“I’m sorry,” he said again, looking up at him this time, “I shouldn’t have-”

But Ilya had looked away from the wall, and was tilting his head downward to meet Shane’s eyes. His expression was soft, just as the fingertips that played across the bridge of Shane’s nose as he spoke,

“I did not think I had anybody that would really care. Svetlana is the same with hers, so we do not celebrate. And then here you are with a cake and-” he broke off, leaning down to press their lips together, leaving Shane instantly wanting more, “You are so *good*.”

Shane blushed happily at the praise, his hand coming up to Ilya's neck to kiss him again.

"So you're not angry?" he murmured against his mouth, and Ilya huffed, his breath catching against Shane's lips.

"No Hollander, I am not angry."

"And you still want the cake?"

Ilya arched an eyebrow at him, and Shane threw the pillow behind his head at his face.

"Yes of course."

"Okay," Shane slipped out from Ilya's arms, laughing at the pathetic noise that he made, and padded out to the kitchen, where the cake still sat, pristine in its little box tied with a pink ribbon.

He dug around in the cabinets for plates and forks, setting them on the island with the muted clinking of ceramic on stone, and took a long, sharp knife from the knife block. He held his breath as he untied the ribbon, hoping and praying that it had made it through the flight all right.

He nearly sighed in relief as he lifted the top of the box. The cake was perfect, decorated with edible flowers and berries, and not looking at all like it had traveled internationally that day.

He cut each of them a slice carefully, and balanced the plates on one arm as he walked back to the bedroom.

Ilya was sprawled out there, his dark blue sheets low on his waist, and looking at Shane with a soft look that Shane knew his own face mirrored.

"Happy birthday," he passed him one of the plates, "It's the Chantilly cake you mentioned."

"I can't believe you remembered that," Ilya said, looking down at the cake on his plate.

Shane almost told him that he remembered everything that he ever told him, all the tiny details that made Ilya who he was, and made him the object of everything that Shane fantasized about.

Instead, he said,

"I didn't get you any candles," he whispered, settling back into the crook of Ilya's arm.

"Is okay, I don't need them," Ilya was looking at him with a naked fondness that Shane wanted to step inside of, get lost in.

"You have to take the first bite."

"I thought you were following a very boring diet."

“I do make exceptions for things.”

“Ah,” Ilya poked him with the end of his fork, “Mr. Free Spirit.”

“Shut up and eat your cake.”

Shane watched as Ilya scooped up a forkful of the cake, and stuffed it into his mouth. He chewed slowly, his brow furrowed, evidently taking the tasting of his birthday cake very seriously. Then, incrementally, a wide, beautiful smile stretched his mouth, and he looked over at Shane with bright, happy eyes.

“Taste it,” he urged him, and Shane smiled softly, bringing his own fork to his mouth.

“Oh wow,” Shane couldn’t help the noise that came from the back of his throat, “Fuck, that’s so good.”

“See?” Ilya’s kissed him, and he tasted sweet like the frosting that was stuck to the corner of his mouth, “Way better than your boring diet.”

“Happy birthday,” Shane murmured again against his mouth, “Sorry I found out when your birthday was, but I promise I didn’t go looking for it.”

“Maybe I’ll start celebrating it,” Ilya broke away from him to take another bite of cake, “With you.”

Shane felt that squeezing, warm feeling spreading across his chest and down his limbs.

He wanted to say it, those three words that would change everything. He wanted to tell Ilya that, everything else be damned, *he* was what he wanted, for better or worse.

But he just...wasn’t quite ready yet.

“I’d like that,” he said, settling back into the crook of Ilya’s arm, and enjoying his cake in a comfortable silence.

He would tell him.

Soon.

When he couldn’t keep it in anymore.

End Notes

Hope you enjoyed, thank you for reading! <3

(I know Ilya's bday is in June in the books, but I selfishly feel like he's a Sagittarius like me so here we are lmao.)

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