

Teeth don't lie

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Teeth don't lie

by [Fangirl_In_Gray](#)

Summary

Do you ever feel depressed? Ilya paused again. Yes, but why would a dentist need to know that? What if this dentist told the rest of the team medical staff, and they benched him or took away his captaincy because he was depressed? He checked no.

Ilya gets a dental cleaning and has to confront the fact that maybe he is not managing his depression as well as he thinks.

Notes

Hi! I haven't written a fanfic in years, but this show and these books are killing me. Ilya's struggle with depression is so real and well portrayed and I just wanted to explore this a little. I'm not much of a writer, but I hope you guys enjoy this.

Take care of your selves and brush your teeth! Like Ilya you deserve to give yourselves the time, energy and care you put into every aspect of you life. xoxoxo

Ilya sat in the leather chair, knees bouncing up and down as he stared at the clipboard in front of him.

A list of questions stared back. Some were easy to check.

Do you get lots of exercise? Yes, duh, why was the team dentist asking this?

Do you smoke? Yes. But less now that Shane had started stealing the lighters he kept in jacket pockets, every time they were about to see each other.

Do you ever feel anxious? Maybe? Sometimes? He had a lot of secrets to worry about, including hockey and Shane, as well as all their secrets. And what kind of question was that for a fucking dentist to ask anyway? Ilya checked no.

Do you ever feel depressed? Ilya paused again. Yes, but why would a dentist need to know that? What if this dentist told the rest of the team medical staff, and they benched him or took away his captaincy because he was depressed? He checked no.

Finally, how often do you brush your teeth? He flushed as he lied, claiming it was every day and night. He knew it was probably gross. He made sure to always brush his teeth before seeing Shane or when he could tell his breath was stuffy and gross. But the gum he'd taken to chewing to cover the smell of his cigarettes masked any bad breath, and it's not like his teammates expected him to smell great all the time. He was a professional hockey player, and if anyone had a problem with his breath, they could deal with it themselves.

It was just that after long days of games, practice, or travel, he didn't always have the energy to perform proper oral care. And on mornings after waking from dreams of his mother and Shane, Ilya didn't always see the point of doing the whole futile routine of teeth brushing and skin care washing that Shane always said was so important. He just didn't really see the point. It's not like the dentist was gonna notice. Over the last few days, he'd finally made a dent in his oral hygiene routine, brushing, flossing, and rinsing, the whole nine yards, so his teeth would be in peak shape for the exam.

Ilya had never been asked questions like this before by the Boston team dentist. He had been a bland, older man, always dressed in a suit and tie. He was helpful when a guy's teeth got knocked out on the ice, and always had an ice pack on hand when a hit to the jaw was turning purple. There was always a yearly dental checkup that mostly consisted of asking Ilya if any of his teeth hurt, doing a quick clean and polish, then sending him off with a bag of dental flossers, telling him he really should floss better.

The Centaurs' dentist was different. Dr Pearson had pink scrubs covered in smily faces that made Ilya a little dizzy to look at. A mask covered her own smile, but her eyes were crinkled and kind in a way that made a lump rise in Ilya's throat.

She glanced down at the clipboard that Ilya had shakily handed over, eyes skimming his answers before placing it to the side.

"Ok, Ilya, let's start looking at your teeth. Is it ok if I get up in there?" Ilya nodded and opened his mouth wide, saying "ahhhhh" in response. Dr. Person laughed and started poking around his gums. Ilya closed his eyes and tried to relax as the metallic sounds of scraping and tapping filled the small room.

What could have been 3 hours or 3 minutes later, Dr Person patted Ilya's arm. "Thanks, Ilya, I know the cleaning can be uncomfortable. I'm just going to have you rinse your mouth with this fluoride mouthwash, then I have a couple of questions before you're done." She said while raising his chair, "Of course." Ilya gulped while accepting the tiny cup. He'd never had to answer this many questions with a dentist. He swished, then spit into the small sink she had pointed to, and sat down.

"Ilya, I know this might be an uncomfortable thing to talk about, but it is important." Ilya's heart sank a little. "Were you honest on the pre-exam questionnaire?"

"I don't... questionnaire?" Ilya forced his mouth to stumble over the strange new word, even though he knew full well what the doctor was referring to.

"The questions on the form from before," she prompted gently, "I don't think you answered them completely truthfully." Ilya let silence fill the room as a response, starting dejectivly at his lap. He knew he needed to put his brave Russian Captain face back on. He was supposed to be the team's loud, fearless, and obnoxious leader, not some sad lump shying away from a fucking dentist, but he was just so tired of pretending.

"I am not asking to shame you. I know some dentists can be pushy or rude about oral care. I just bring it up because the health of your teeth is really important for your overall health, and I can tell yours haven't been getting proper care. I want to understand why you might not be brushing your teeth when you seem to know you should be.

Ilya glanced up. Dr. Pearson was looking back, but she wasn't frowning at him. She didn't look mean or disinterested. Instead, her face was open in a way that kinda made Ilya want to burst into tears and spill all of his secrets. It was a feeling he really only got when Shane brought him coffee in the morning, asking him how he slept, or Yuna and David sent him home after a game night, arms full of home-cooked leftovers, telling him to call them, "if he needed anything in the world, really anything Ilya. We will be there." Of course, he never told Shane the truth about how he was sleeping or took his parents up on their offer, even when he was feeling really shitty and alone.

After Ilya still didn't reply, Dr Pearson sighed, not unkindly, and leaned towards him. "Ilya, I don't mean to pry, but oftentimes when something is struggling mentally, especially when they have lots of responsibilities and commitments that keep them going about their daily life without letting any of their hurt show, the first place to show the signs of struggle will be their teeth and gums." Ilya's heart skipped a beat, and he tried to breathe in through his nose to settle the nerves that were brewing inside. "I know that I am not a mental health professional, and I can't diagnose you with anything, but I do know you have not been taking care of your teeth, and I would be willing to bet that teeth are not the only part of your life you are neglecting."

Ilya took in another shaky breath before muttering, "Ummm, I think that maybe you are right. I..." He paused again, steeling himself. "I don't brush teeth sometimes because it is um, hard?" He looked up at Dr. Pearson, expecting her face to react to the thought of brushing teeth being hard, but she just watched him with the same open expression. Ilya realized he trusted her. "It seems like there is no point, or it just feels." Ilya didn't really know how he had meant to finish that thought, so he let it die in the air, but Dr. Pearson was nodding now.

Fuck, Ilya thought, she's going to tell the rest of the medical staff, he could feel his chest getting tight and embarrassingly had to blink tears down.

"But it's not like it matters for the team. I am not going to stop doing things that make me good at hockey. I am great at hockey, no matter what." Ilya's words sounded a little panicked even to himself, but Dr. Pearson laughed and placed her hand on his knee. It was nice, grounding.

"Ilya, no one is questioning your hockey skills. I think if I even suggested that Ilya Rosanov, pride and joy of the centaurs, couldn't play hockey because he isn't flossing every day, I would be kicked out of Ottawa, maybe even Canada!" Ilya felt his heart swell a little at that. He loved hearing how much Ottawa had embraced him.

He couldn't wait to marry Shane for many reasons. Quite a few were extremely sexual in nature, others just showed how gooey his heart had turned over the stupid Captain of Stupid Montreal, but he was also incredibly excited to become an official Canadian. David had gotten him boxer briefs with the Canadian flag and a moose playing hockey as a gift when he signed with Ottawa, as a welcome gift. Although they had been meant as a joke, he loved them.

"I just think that maybe a mental health professional would be beneficial for multiple aspects of your life." She continued, releasing his knee with a gentle squeeze. He grunted in agreement, not trusting his voice to come out steady.

"I'm sure the team could recommend someone here in Ottawa, or if you don't want the rest of the medical staff to know about any of this, I won't say a word, but it would be something to look into on your own, ok?" Ilya nodded. He knew he had a problem and had been thinking about finding someone to talk to, but maybe this would be the push he needed.

He cleared his throat that still felt a little lumpy, "Ok, I will think about it." Dr Pearson smiled and turned away to reach into a little cabinet.

While she was turned away, Ilya quickly muttered, "Thank you." He swallowed before starting again, "for saying this and for listening. I didn't think..." Ilya struggled to finish his thought, but when Dr. Pearson turned around, her eyes showed understanding.

"Teeth are more revealing than people realize," she winked, handing him a little bag with floss, toothpaste, and a small pack of stickers. When Ilya held up the stickers, she laughed, "Harris insisted after his last cleaning that the 'goody bags' needed more goodies, so I added some stickers."

Ilya laughed, his chest loosening. "Of course he did." He started to stand for the chair before pausing to ask, "But my teeth are ok for now, yes?"

Dr. Pearson nodded. "I'd like to see them again before the season is over, maybe around January. There are a couple of spots I want to keep an eye on, but none require any work yet, especially if you can maintain your oral care."

"Of course. I will make sure to do better," Ilya replied with a relieved look on his face. Shane would have been so annoying if Ilya needed a root canal. He'd probably hide all the candy Ilya had stashed around his Montreal place and tell Yuna and David to stop giving him ice cream.

"I'm not worried about your gums or teeth, Ilya, especially if they are any bit as resilient as you are." Ilya blushed as he headed to the door. "Thank you, Dr. Pearson. I will see you around."

Later that night, Ilya lay across his bed. He still felt weird from his conversation with Dr. Pearson. But it wasn't a bad weird. She had made him feel seen in a way he hadn't in a long time. It had been strangely nice to be confronted with his struggles by someone else, even when he thought he had been covering it all up really well. And the advice she had given him had not been anything he hadn't already been thinking about. It was probably a needed push in the right direction.

His phone lit up with a call. "Hi, Ilya!" Shane's voice filled the room, making the Russian melt.

"How was your day? You all had your pre-season physicals today, right? How did it go?"

"It was fine, Shane, they said I was in peak health. They told me to eat as many McMuffins as I want." Shane rolled his eyes fondly.

"Right, and then they told you to start fucking the captain of a rival team, right?"

"Why yes, how did you know this?" Ilya laughed, playing along.

"Ok, enough boring medical talk, you have too many clothes on, off off," Ilya demanded.

He knew he had to tell Shane about how he had been feeling at some point, and he knew his boyfriend would be nothing but supportive, but that was a problem for later. Now he had a beautiful man on the phone, a free evening, and a dick becoming harder and harder to ignore.

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