

ya lyublyu tebya

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by [leaveanote](#)

Summary

Right after that fateful day at the cottage, Shane starts practicing how to say I love you in Russian.

It happens to jog a memory.

Of the last time Ilya had truly spoken to him in Russian.

“Did you...did you tell me you loved me that night?”

Notes

just finished reading The Long Game and I have lots of loving to write for these two!!

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“Mm. Can you say it in Russian again?”

Ilya pulled Shane’s hand to his lips and kissed his fingers. “Ya lyublyu tebya.”

“Ya-loo-blue-tee-baa,” Shane murmured back.

Ilya laughed, and turned off the lamp.

— Heated Rivalry, Chapter 25

Two days later, at the cottage

The sun seeped sweetly through the bedroom windows, but it was the smell of bacon that woke Ilya. He felt around blindly for Shane, briefly entertaining a moment of panic at the empty bed—was everything that happened these past few days a dream?—but then he heard the faint, unmistakable sounds of Shane humming to himself in the kitchen.

Ilya smiled and shoved himself out of Shane’s comfortable bed. He stretched his sex-sore muscles, loping to the kitchen.

Shane was putting the finishing touches on what seemed to be a full American-style breakfast: eggs, bacon, even pancakes. He was wearing a fresh pair of briefs and nothing else. Sunlight streamed through his beautiful windows. Ilya thought if there was a heaven, it would have to look like this.

“Am I dreaming?” he murmured, folding Shane into his arms.

“Good morning,” Shane said, a little breathless, when Ilya finally broke the kiss.

“Good morning, moy lyubimyy,” he rumbled, letting his hands travel his blushing boyfriend’s beautiful body. “Seriously. I know you don’t eat like this right now.”

“Yeah but you do,” Shane said, eyes soft, “and I know it’s okay to have treats sometimes. And, well, this feels worth celebrating.”

Ilya was smiling so hard it hurt. He hadn’t known that was possible.

“What, you woke up early and went shopping for me?”

“Yeah,” Shane said. He was angling his hips into Ilya the way he did when he wanted sex. Ilya wasn’t sure Shane realized when he did it. He loved it. “I hope it turned out okay. Haven’t made this regular stuff in ages. My mom walked me through the recipes and stuff though.”

Ilya shook his head and kissed Shane senseless. Enveloped his boyfriend in his arms, reveling in the warm sun and the smell of a full breakfast.

No matter what the future would bring, if this was in it, Ilya knew he was luckier than he’d ever before had a hope of being.

“Thank you,” he said sincerely. “Thank you, thank you, thank you,” punctuating each one with kisses on Shane’s cute freckles. “This is so kind. I’m so grateful. Ya lyublyu tebya. I love you, Shane.”

Shane captured his mouth in a hungry kiss, his strong hands pulling Ilya impossibly closer.

“I love you too, Ilya. So, so fucking much.” He sniffed, squeezing Ilya’s biceps. “Wanna show you.”

“You do, sweetheart,” Ilya grinned. He arched his brows. “Okay, can’t wait anymore. Smells too good. Let’s *eat!*”

Yuna’s guidance hadn’t steered them wrong. The breakfast was stupid good, and it *did* feel like a celebration. Ilya made fresh coffee for them both, and they took their plates on Shane’s patio, enjoying the fresh air. Ilya wished he could’ve taken a picture of Shane biting into bacon for the first time in ages, the look on his face was one to remember.

“It’s good to remember,” Ilya said, “Our bodies are capable of more pleasures than hockey.”

“You don’t let me forget that,” Shane said, blushing a bit. Ilya grinned at him.

“You have some syrup on your cheek,” he pointed out. He licked his thumb and rubbed it against the sticky spot at the corner of Shane’s mouth.

“Jesus,” Shane said shakily, his eyes wide.

Ilya’s grin went crooked.

“You can just call me Ilya,” he said.

Shane snorted, shoving at him. Ilya shoved back, and then they were kissing, and then they were too full from the breakfast to do anything else so Ilya shoved everything in the sink and made Shane crawl into bed for a nap with him.

They woke up in each other's arms almost twenty minutes later.

"You smell like bacon," Ilya murmured into Shane's hair. "Delicious."

"Ew," Shane said, but he giggled. And then he sighed. "I know you're right. About the...our bodies are capable of more pleasures than hockey. Not just about sex. I gotta define myself by things outside of hockey too, and that means letting myself enjoy things that aren't in *service* of hockey." He planted a lazy kiss on Ilya's chest. "That's why I went to get the breakfast stuff."

"That is healthy," Ilya said. "Not *nutritionally*," he added, because he could tell Shane was about to be Shane about it, "but it's good for you. Your body doesn't belong to the league. You get one life. Enjoy it."

Shane smiled.

"I think I am," he said softly, and Ilya just about melted.

"Fuck," he muttered, and pulled Shane up to kiss him.

Shane came to him so eagerly, so hungrily, so unafraid. It made Ilya's entire body feel *bright*.

"You're right," Shane gasped out, as Ilya rolled on top of him, licking his jaw. "My body *doesn't* belong to the league. It's yours. It's all yours. Fuck, Ilya."

Jesus Christ.

"*Shane.*"

"Oh, God," Shane said, and then he was tangled in Ilya's arms, presenting himself in perfect surrender.

"Ya lyublyu tebya," Ilya murmured between kisses. "I love you, I love you, I love you."

"Ya-loo-blue-tee-baa," Shane tried again, and Ilya's heart soared.

"Not bad."

"It's terrible."

"You'd better practice, then," Ilya said, and Shane's eyes went wide and wet.

Ilya set about kissing him again, and was just about to make his way down Shane's body, when Shane stopped him.

"Lyoo blue tee beh," he said again, something strangely distant in his voice.

"I didn't mean practice *now*, Hollander."

Shane pulled Ilya up to meet his eye so they were both sitting on the bed. He looked scared, which was bad. But also still like he wanted Ilya, which was good.

How could Shane look both things at once? Ilya supposed he had plenty of experience at it.

"Have you...said that to me before?"

It felt like Ilya's blood froze. "What?"

"I keep thinking it, you know, because I want to say it back, and say it right, right?" Shane swallowed. "And I—God, I mean, maybe I have no idea what I'm talking about. But the way you said it, just now. The way you say it." Shane looked at him, eyes shining. "I haven't heard a ton of Russian in my life, you know. It sounds...familiar."

Ilya's lip was trembling, he knew it. He had not expected Shane to *retroactively remember* he'd heard a version of those exact Russian words before, especially when so much had happened since. Shane was always surprising him.

"Did you...tell me you loved me that night?" Shane was looking at him in mingled awe and horror. "For the first time, a—a million miles away, and after burying your father—"

Ilya swallowed, hard.

"Yes," he admitted, and he could almost *feel* Shane's gasp. "I had to. I'm sorry I didn't tell you. Felt like...not a lie. But not the truth. To say it like that."

And then Shane was hugging him. Shane was hugging him in that full body embrace that meant pure and utter comfort, and Ilya clung back like a drowning man might cling to driftwood.

"Ilya. *I'm* sorry. It's not a lie. I get it," Shane said earnestly. "I never, ever want you to feel alone like you did that night. Not ever again. We're in this together now."

Ilya sniffed and hugged him closer. Shane nuzzled into him, rubbing his back.

"Ilya," he said softly, "I almost said it that night myself."

Ilya blinked, heart racing. "What?"

"I wanted to. So badly. Of course I was in love with you then too. I wanted to be your boyfriend. I wanted to comfort you like a boyfriend does. I wanted to support you, just like you've done for me these past few days. I loved you then, I love you now."

Ilya pulled back, looked Shane in the eye, and kissed him square on the mouth.

Shane kissed him back with urgency, like he needed Ilya to believe him.

And Ilya did.

“Ya-loo-blue-tee-baa,” Shane tried, a little better this time. Ilya’s heart squeezed. It did hit different, being told the man he loved loved him back, in his own language. His mother tongue. “How’s that?”

“Getting better,” Ilya said, and kissed him.

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