

What If I Can't Close My Eyes Without You In My Head?

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What If I Can't Close My Eyes Without You In My Head?

by [theemporium](#)

Summary

Five more minutes, Ilya told himself, fighting the slow, sleepy blinks and the dangerous urge that wanted nothing more than to pull the duvet over the two of them. Five more minutes and then I will go. Hollander is asleep, he can't bitch about any risks.

Ilya woke up fifteen minutes later, warm and content. He ignored the feeling as he slid out the bed, his chest tightening at the way Shane grabbed the pillow he was sleeping on and tugged it closer. He quickly got dressed, letting his eyes linger on Shane for a few more seconds before quickly slipping out the room.

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Or, in which it takes a therapy session for Ilya to realise that Shane Hollander is his favourite weighted blanket.

Notes

And once again I ask everyone just ignore the dodgy timeline of the flashbacks. I couldn't be bothered working out what took place when and if it worked together. We should all just use our imagination and get lost in the gay hockey show and pretend it works even if it might not!

I cannot believe the gay hockey show and the new 5sos album got me writing after months of nothing.

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

“Let’s talk about your sleeping habits.”

Ilya tore his eyes away from the potted plant in the corner of the room. It was new, he was sure of it. He hadn’t noticed it in any of his previous sessions. It was a monstrous thing, almost four feet tall with big, green leaves that were far too shiny to be real. Though, in a room with no windows, he assumed plastic plants were the only way to go.

It had been nice to focus on over Galina’s beady gaze that had been locked on him from the second he had stepped into the room. He already knew she had some opinions on the fact he cancelled the last two appointments. It was not a confrontation he was looking forward to, mostly because he knew she wouldn’t even push or ask. He would just blurt something out eventually.

“My sleeping habits?” Ilya repeated, his lips turned downwards. For a short moment—and it was an extremely short moment—he wondered if he was so out of practice with his own mother tongue that he misunderstood her.

“As a hockey player, sleep is an important part of your routine. Sometimes, disruptions can seep into other aspects of our daily lives.” Galina was looking at him, patient but expectant.

“My—” He cut himself off, fighting the urge to squirm in his seat. He had been seeing her for well over two years now, probably more at this point. It was stupid for him to choke on the damned reason he was sitting in the office, but he still couldn’t bring himself to say it. Galina never called him out on it. “It does not affect my sleeping. I sleep fine.”

Galina didn’t look away. “Do you?”

Ilya’s frown deepened. “I sleep normally. Like I always have.”

“What does a typical sleeping routine look like for you?” Galina asked, briefly looking away to scribble something in her notes before she turned her attention back to him. She almost looked amused as she continued, “do you have a bedtime?”

Ilya snorted, despite himself. His mind briefly flashed to Shane and the way his nose scrunched up when he was trying to hold back his yawns, trying to pretend like he didn’t plan to be in bed by ten but was holding back on his own routine because Ilya had pressed play on another episode of some stupid show they were bingeing together.

It was sweet that he was willing to mess up his own schedule because he was too comfortable in Ilya’s arms, content to be pressed up against Ilya’s chest on the couch rather than alone in their bed. Even if he would grumble about not having a proper night’s sleep in the morning whilst mashing up the bananas for his smoothie and ignoring Ilya’s snickering.

“No,” he replied instead. “I get tired, I lie down and I eventually go to sleep. Just like everyone else.”

Galina raised a brow. “Eventually?”

“Well,” Ilya fought the urge to squirm again. “Sometimes it takes longer than others. I don’t know. It just happens.”

“Because of the dreams?” She asked, quiet and kind but not hiding away from the question.

Ilya bit back the urge to snap back, to mutter ‘no’ and pretend like his skin didn’t suddenly feel so tight on his body, around his bones. But he knew there was no point in lying, not in these sessions. It wouldn’t benefit either of them and, truthfully, there was still a part of Ilya that hoped somewhere in these appointments that they would find an answer to his problems. That maybe there will be a ‘cure’, despite Galina’s constant reminder that he didn’t need to be cured from anything.

You aren’t broken, Ilya, she had said. Your brain is just wired a little differently and sometimes, there are days that are harder for you. Sometimes it will feel like you are fighting yourself. But that does not mean you are broken. And it does not mean you need to be fixed. These sessions are about helping you understand yourself better when those hard days come.

Logically, he knew she was right. He understood what she meant. But sometimes, Ilya didn’t like to think logically. Sometimes, Ilya was his own worst critic.

But he had promised himself he would try in these appointments, that he would try to understand himself better—even the parts he didn’t like.

“Not always,” he admitted, sinking further back onto the couch. His hand aimlessly reached out for one of the cushions, tugging it onto his lap and holding onto it tightly. “Sometimes, it’s just...hard to sleep.”

Galina nodded. “Has it always been like this? Even when you were in Boston?”

Ilya paused for a few moments. “I had things that helped.”

“Like what?”

“Hockey. Sex. Anything that just made it easier to just...fall straight to sleep.”

“You exhausted yourself,” Galina supplied, and he guessed she was right. She always tended to be right on these things. It was kind of irritating, if he was honest.

“Maybe so,” he said with a shrug of his shoulders. “It helped.”

“How so?” Galina asked. “Did you feel more settled? Less awake? Was it easier to shut your brain off after your body had been exhausted through hockey or sex?”

And honestly? No. It didn’t really.

Nine times out of ten, it was a nice distraction from whatever he was trying to ignore. He remembered countless afternoons in Boston where he would stay late after practice to run some drills to avoid thinking about the missed goals from the game before. He remembered countless nights distracting himself with someone just to ignore the unread messages from

his family back home in Russia. He remembered throwing himself into countless situations in hopes that he could forget he was Ilya Rozanov, to forget that he was even a person.

It was a distraction, but never a solution.

There were rarely any nights Ilya could remember where sleep felt easy, where it was right there in the palm of his hand—warm and comforting and luring him in.

But he remembered those rare nights well.

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The orgasm had long worn off to the point the cum drying on his stomach was irritating rather than hot, but Ilya couldn't bring himself to care all that much.

There was a voice in the back of his head reminding him that he should probably head out soon before the roads got too slick and the ice got worse. Boston was a different kind of cold to Russia, a different kind of winter that he was slowly getting used to since moving over a year ago. But it was a place that he could see himself calling home, a place he wished he could stay in all year round.

The noise from the bustling city was quieter from the hotel room, considering they were at least seven floors up. It had been a busy weekend for weddings apparently, at least that was what the receptionist had said over the phone when Ilya had tried to book another room. It didn't work out. It was probably a sign from the universe that he should let go of this stupidly dangerous game he was playing with his rival.

Instead, Ilya had managed to convince Shane to sneak him into his hotel room whilst the rest of his team were out getting shit-faced drunk on the streets of Boston.

He turned his head to the side, finding said rival sprawled out on the bed beside him with his face squished against the pillow.

"Alive, Hollander?" He called out, because he couldn't help himself.

All he received in response was a muffled but disgruntled groan.

"Yes," he hummed, nodding even though Shane wasn't looking at him. "Am just that good. You are welcome."

"Whatever," Shane grumbled, twisting his head a little so Ilya could hear him more clearly. His eyes remained closed. Ilya pretended like it didn't bother him. "I had more ice time than you."

“Barely,” Ilya scoffed.

“And we won,” Shane added, a smug smile on his lips. Ilya also pretended like his dick didn’t pathetically twitch at the pride in his voice. “It’s a whole new kind of exhaustion when you are on a seven game win streak. You wouldn’t understand.”

“Brat,” Ilya grumbled under his breath in Russian as he reached over to pinch Shane’s side. He was delighted in the high pitched noise Shane let out in response.

The silence lulled between, comfortable but a little awkward, and that voice in the back of Ilya’s mind returned. He let out a sigh, mentally counting to three before he pulled himself off the bed and headed towards the ensuite to clean himself up.

He worked quickly before grabbing a small hand towel and running it under warm water, heading back towards the bedroom where Shane was still sprawled across the bed. The other boy muttered out a soft thanks as Ilya ran the towel over him, cleaning him up as best he could from the position he was in since Shane didn’t seem eager to move.

“Such a princess,” Ilya murmured, entirely too fond. He once again chose to ignore that though.

Ilya tossed the towel to the side, snickering at the way Shane’s nose scrunched up at the muffled *splat* that echoed through the room as it dropped onto the carpet. He crawled his way back up the bed until he was hovering over the other boy, the perfect position to lean down and press a few chaste kisses between the few freckles on his back.

“M’that tickles,” Shane rasped, swallowing harshly as he glanced at him over his shoulder. Ilya wasn’t sure what he saw on his face before he shuffled around until he was laying on his back underneath him. “Hi.”

Ilya’s lips twitched. “Hello.”

Shane glanced over at the small clock on the bedside table before returning his gaze to Ilya. “The guys will probably be back soon.”

“Kicking me out already?” Ilya teased, a faux pout on his lips. “Is not fair, only made you come once.”

He was delighted at the way Shane’s cheeks burned red at the memory. “It’s too risky.”

“It turns you on,” Ilya countered.

Shane didn’t disagree.

“Relax, Hollander,” Ilya murmured, leaning down until their lips were brushing. “Will fuck you good one more time before your team gets back.”

And Ilya was a man of his word.

Despite the lingering threat of the rest of the Montreal team making their way back to the hotel soon (Ilya is pretty sure Shane mentioned a morning flight) hanging over them, it didn't stop Ilya ticking off the list in his head he had been making the last time he had Shane in a bed, in Montreal a few months ago.

He made Shane come two more times, thank you very much. And he thoroughly enjoyed every moan, whimper and whiny noise Shane made as he fucked him until he was unable to keep himself up. Until he was so fucked out, cheek pressed against the mattress that it was easy for Ilya to tug him closer, to manhandle him until he was pressed against his chest and nuzzling his face against Ilya's neck as he exploded in Ilya's hand.

Shane was barely coherent, much to Ilya's own amusement and pride. His cheeks were flushed, his hair was a mess and half of his body was sprawled over Ilya as they both laid between the rumpled sheets, sweaty and tired and satisfied.

The silence was only comforting for so long. The voice from earlier returned, just as persistent and annoying as it was every other night. He replayed the game in his head, every mistake and every lost chance. He thought about the fact he had practice early the next morning, that Coach would be pushing them harder after the embarrassing loss. He thought about the fact he had missed three shooting opportunities and let down the home crowd and would probably have a voicemail from his father summarising his failures in the morning and —

Shane shuffled closer, letting out a small puff of air against Ilya's chest. He was warm and the feeling of his sweaty skin pressed against Ilya's should have been annoying but it was...not. It was almost nice.

Ilya glanced at the clock before turning back to Shane. The rest of his team would be returning soon and the longer he stayed, the higher the risk of being caught by one of Shane's teammates grew.

Five more minutes, Ilya told himself, fighting the slow, sleepy blinks and the dangerous urge that wanted nothing more than to pull the duvet over the two of them. *Five more minutes and then I will go. Hollander is asleep, he can't bitch about any risks.*

Ilya woke up fifteen minutes later, warm and content. He ignored the feeling as he slid out the bed, his chest tightening at the way Shane grabbed the pillow he was sleeping on and tugged it closer. He quickly got dressed, letting his eyes linger on Shane for a few more seconds before quickly slipping out the room.

He wasn't caught by any of Shane's teammates. It wasn't even close.

But Ilya told himself that was why his chest felt so tight as he drove away from the hotel room and back to his Boston penthouse. It was just the adrenaline wearing off, the dangerous thrill slipping away.

No other reason, Ilya said to himself as he laid alone in his bed where sleep seemed to evade him in a way it hadn't in Shane's hotel room.

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“Sometimes,” Ilya answered vaguely, twisting a loose thread from the cushion around his finger.

Galina raised her eyebrows in questioning, pen in hand as though she was waiting to scribble something down.

“I don’t have to tell you all my secrets,” Ilya retorted childishly, a frown forming when he watched her scribble something on her notepad anyway.

“So, sex and hockey weren’t long term solutions in Boston,” Galina commented, leaning back in her chair. She shrugged a little, waving her hand that was still holding the pen. “I assume that must be frustrating when you thought you had found a solution.”

“Well,” Ilya started before pausing.

“It’s okay to admit that you struggled with something,” Galina assured him, and it was something he had heard many times before inside the walls of her office.

“It wasn’t a big issue,” Ilya said, almost sounding insistent. “It wasn’t ideal, but I would eventually sleep. I clearly got enough that it didn’t affect my game.”

“It may have not affected you physically, but it could have affected you mentally.”

Ilya frowned.

“There must have been a time where you tried something beyond hockey or sex to get to sleep,” Galina continued.

Ilya swallowed. “Once.”

“Once?”

Ilya nodded. “It didn’t work out though. Not the way I wanted it too.”

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Ilya stared at the door for a solid five minutes, so confident that this was some badly played out prank. Shane Hollander was by no means a jokester though, maybe that was why it was so bad.

Because Ilya had planned it. He thought he had bet Shane at his own game, that he had thought out every small detail and possibility and it would work out. He thought he had the perfect game strategy and it would be an easy win.

However, as he stared at his apartment door helplessly, he realised he was very wrong. He realised that Shane was serious when he left. He realised that all his planning and scheming was pointless because Shane was no longer there and he was not coming back.

Because despite what Ilya wanted, Shane did not stay.

Ilya told himself that he didn't even know why he wanted Shane to stay in the first place. He told himself it was because it seemed pointless to meet up in hotel rooms and risk their teammates finding out when they had perfectly good apartments to utilise, and it was only natural to spend some time in said apartments after. He told himself it was just a logical solution to a problem that didn't really exist.

He told himself it had nothing to do with the fact he was chasing that feeling from the Boston hotel room a lifetime ago, chasing that easy feeling that lulled him to sleep as he laid next to Shane.

It took Ilya thirty minutes before he moved from his spot on the couch. He moved around his apartment silently, cleaning up whatever little mess was left from the tuna melts he made for dinner. He moved like he was in a trance, like he couldn't quite believe any of this was real and he was ready to (ironically) wake up from whatever dream he was having.

Ilya didn't wake up.

Instead, he laid in his bed, alone, and stared aimlessly at the ceiling until sleep finally took him.

The sun rose an hour after he fell asleep.

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"But that was Boston," Ilya said, waving his hand dismissively as he tried to soothe the dull ache in his chest.

He thought about Shane now—*his* Shane. The Shane that happily planted himself against Ilya's side on the couch after dinner. The Shane that kissed him whenever he made a particularly interesting comment about another team's play when they were watching a game.

The Shane that waited until he crawled into bed beside him before he let himself fall asleep because he liked knowing Ilya was next to him.

His Shane was not the one who walked out his Boston penthouse all those years ago. That was a different Shane, just like he was a different Ilya. They had changed since then—much better, if Ilya said so himself.

“Has your sleep been better since you moved to Ottawa?” Galina asked, tilting her head slightly as she patiently waited for an answer. She was always patient with him. He never appreciated it more than when he saw her after a few weeks, after dealing with demanding and restless reporters that would snap at him for an answer if he took longer than a few seconds to respond.

“It’s been fine,” Ilya answered automatically before frowning a little, his lips turned downwards as he contemplated it. He thought back to the move, to the weeks after he signed his contract and the realisation hit him that he was leaving Boston behind. That he was taking the first steps towards his and Shane’s future together. “I think it was worse at the start.”

Galina nodded. “How so?”

“Everything was new. Different.” Ilya shrugged helplessly, letting his eyes focus back on the fake potted plant in the corner of the room. “Makes sense it would be harder.”

“Is it like that when you are on the road?” Galina asked in a voice that made Ilya feel like she already knew the answer. “When you are in a hotel room instead of your own bed?”

His eyes narrowed. “What’s your point?”

She simply smiles at him, kind and expectant once again. “Why was it worse at the start?”

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As much as Ilya liked to wind Shane up on how he missed his bachelor pad in Boston, it was nice to move into a proper house. He had seen more than enough city skyline views in his lifetime. He was ready for something different.

And different came in the form of the house he had purchased in a residential neighbourhood in Ottawa. There was still plenty of privacy, the nearest neighbour a short walk away, but it was nice. It was like the houses he teased older teammates for having, somewhere you would settle down and think about having a family in.

Ilya would never admit it to Shane but he had thought about that exact scenario for themselves when he first viewed the house.

Shane is in Montreal, his brain had supplied unhelpfully whenever Ilya got too lost in his own fantasy. He is in Montreal and it will be years before either of you retire, let alone start a family. Kids and dogs and mornings spent wrangling multiple bodies out the house were not in the near future.

Ilya would ignore that voice and the distant ache of a future so far from his grasp. He would ignore it and focus on more pressing tasks, such as the fact his very big house in Ottawa was also very empty.

He had contemplated hiring someone to furnish it the same way he had done with his Boston penthouse, but it hadn't felt right. Maybe he was still clinging onto the hopes and dreams of that far future, but he wanted this place to feel like a *home*. He wanted it to be a place he was excited to come back to, a place that Shane felt comfortable in when he was visiting from Montreal.

Yuna and David had also offered their help. He knew they were excited that at least one of their sons was close to them now. Despite all of Yuna's talks about whether he was sure on giving up another chance of a cup in Boston to be closer to Shane in Ottawa, she had been delighted to have him a short drive away. She had been the one sending him different house listings the second his season was over and the contract with the Centaurs was signed.

And, Ilya distantly thought as he walked through his mostly empty house and made his way to the master bedroom upstairs, it would be nice to go shopping with the Hollanders. It would be nice to argue with Yuna on interior design and snort at David's attempts at pretending like he knew whether Ilya needed both wine glasses and champagne flutes for the kitchen. It would feel like a family day out.

It would be more memorable than throwing some money at someone and tipping enough to get it done as fast as possible so he could get away from Russia and his family like he had done with his place in Boston.

Soon enough, his house would feel like a home but it just felt like a distant hope right now.

Ilya tried to push those thoughts aside as he climbed into bed. It was huge and comfy with fresh sheets he had remembered to put on earlier to make his life a little easier. But it felt impersonal, it felt like he was back in a hotel room on a long roadie, tired and sick of sleeping in a bunch of beds that weren't his.

Instinctively, his hand reached out.

Ilya felt something in his chest tighten when all he could feel beneath his fingers were cold, crisp sheets. The summer had spoiled him. He had gotten used to having Shane so close over the last few weeks. He had gotten used to being able to reach out and pull Shane close. He had gotten used to the way Shane would move so easily, more than happy to curl himself around Ilya's body like a koala.

But Shane wasn't here.

He wanted to be and he had tried so hard to be. But Montreal wanted him back early before the rest of the team returned for training camp. And despite all his bargaining, management had made it clear that it was less of a question and more of a demand.

Shane had looked heartbroken when he told him. He had been so eager to see Ilya's new place in person, to help him move and settle in. He had been ready to show Ilya some of his favourite places, to show Ilya around the city he grew up in, to show Ilya that there was more to Ottawa than just the close proximity to him.

It had made Ilya's heart fucking swoon. He couldn't help himself from leaning down, smacking a kiss onto Shane's lips and assuring his boyfriend that fucking him in every single room of his new house could wait a few days.

If he closed his eyes, he could still see Shane's blushing face staring back at him.

And that was all Ilya could do as he laid in his new bed in his new house. He just had to close his eyes and pretend his boyfriend was right there beside him, to hope that was enough to help him fall asleep. He had to pretend that the cold side of the bed didn't bother him and that somehow moving closer to Shane wasn't so much worse when he wasn't right by his side.

As he laid alone, Ilya had to pretend that his heart, soul and whole fucking body wasn't aching for something more.

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"It was just a rough patch," Ilya said, though his voice didn't sound as confident as it had at the start of the session.

Instead, his gaze had been focused on that stupid plastic plant as he tried to ignore the way his cheeks felt like they were on fire. As he tried to ignore the voice in his head whispering that one look into his eyes and Galina would be able to read every dirty little secret Ilya has kept to himself since the day he was born.

"So, you had rough patches in Boston and rough patches here. I can't imagine Russia was any better—"

Ilya snorted at the understatement.

"—it makes me wonder if there is any place you have ever felt safe," Galina continued.

The word *safe* felt heavy, more weighted than the rest of her sentence. It was enough for Ilya's gaze to snap back to her, his brows furrowed and his lips turned down and the automatic feeling to defend *something*—though he didn't know *what*.

“What do you mean, safe?” Ilya demanded, fighting the urge to tug the cushion on his lap closer to his chest. “I feel safe. You think I can’t sleep sometimes because I think someone is going to break in and kill me?”

Galina raised her brows.

“I only had that dream once,” Ilya grumbled, almost pouting. “Yuna wanted to watch some sort of documentary.”

Her lips twitched upwards.

“It was scary!”

“I am sure it was,” Galina soothed, nodding a little as she spoke. “But that is not what I meant. What I mean to ask is has there ever been a place that has felt like home to you, Ilya?”

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BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Ilya let out a long, drawn out groan as the alarm pieced through the room. It was loud and insistent and one of his least favourite sounds in the world, especially since he knew that if he opened his eyes and looked, there was a high chance that the sun had barely begun to rise.

“Shit, sorry,” Shane murmured, the sheets rustling as he shuffled towards his bedside table and quickly smacked his hand around until he finally found his phone and managed to switch the alarm off. “Forgot to change it to a later time.”

“Is summer, Hollander,” Ilya grumbled, nuzzling his face further into his pillow. “Nobody has alarms. Only boring people. Stop being boring.”

Shane snorted, placing his phone back on the bedside table before he laid back down. “It’s nice to have a routine, even in the summer.”

Ilya made a buzzer noise. “Wrong.”

“And you like it when I’m boring,” Shane countered.

Ilya paused before huffing out, “whatever.”

Shane could barely hide his grin as he shuffled closer, allowing himself to take in the sight of his boyfriend laid out on the bed, the sheet half way down his back and the early morning

light shining across the muscles of his back and messy curls. He looked like a goddamn Ancient Greek statue come to life.

Shane didn't hesitate as he sprawled himself over Ilya's back, leaning down to press a lingering kiss on his boyfriend's shoulder blade just to be followed by another. "Good morning."

Ilya hummed, though it sounded a lot more positive as he felt the familiar weight of his boyfriend on top of him. "Good morning, *moy arakhis*."

He could feel Shane's nose scrunch against his shoulder as he pondered. "I have no clue."

"My peanut," Ilya replied, a boyish grin on his face that was still half-smushed against the pillow.

"Peanut," Shane repeated, almost a squawk and that was all it took for Ilya to burst out laughing.

He ignored Shane's groans of protest as he twisted around in the bed until he was laying on his back, the weight of his boyfriend comfortably on his chest and their legs tangled together under the sheets. "Hello."

"Hi," Shane smiled back at him, so soft and sweet and worth being up at a god awful time.

"Is first day of summer. You need to learn how to relax," Ilya told him, reaching out to playfully tug on a strand of Shane's hair before dutifully tucking it behind his ear. He allowed his fingers to skim along the shell of his ear and along his jaw before settling to pinch his chin lightly. "You need lots of sleep."

Shane raised his brows, his gaze fond. "Oh yeah? How come?"

"Because I am going to fuck you, Hollander," Ilya replied without hesitation. "All day. Every day. That is proper way to enjoy summer. We cannot do that if you wake up before the fucking sun."

Shane beamed, even if his face burned at his boyfriend's words. "That seems like a lot of cardio."

"I train you to keep up," Ilya teased, grinning back.

"My parents are coming over for dinner," Shane countered, as though Ilya had forgotten the long-standing tradition of having Yuna and David around on their first day back at the cottage. "And there's still some emails I need to respond to—"

"Boring," Ilya groaned, loud and obnoxious. He wound his other arm around Shane's waist to keep him pressed close, as though Shane could even bring himself to leave their bed at that moment. "You know what is more interesting? Me fucking you on pool table after I beat you."

Shane's eyes narrowed. "If I remember correctly—"

“You don’t.”

“—I won last summer,” Shane replied diligently.

“You have bad memory, Hollander. That is wrong. That is lie,” Ilya said, shaking his head. “See? You are tired and not resting enough.”

“You’re an asshole,” Shane murmured as he leaned down to rest his head against Ilya’s shoulder, trying to hold back a yawn that threatened to escape.

“Go back to sleep, sweetheart,” Ilya murmured, pressing his lips to the top of Shane’s head. “Plenty of time for me to beat you and fuck you after. We sleep now.”

“Whatever,” Shane huffed but nuzzled himself closer, slumped against Ilya’s chest and happy to let sleep take over as Ilya ran his fingers through Shane’s hair.

“I love you,” Ilya murmured in Russian as he closed his eyes, his arms wrapped around his boyfriend to keep him close as he let the lure of sleep drag him back in. There was something serene and comforting about the cottage, but falling asleep in that exact position every single time was Ilya’s favourite thing ever summer.

...

“You know, weighted blankets are said to have benefits for people suffering with insomnia.”

Ilya blinked, a crease forming between his brows. He didn’t like the idea that he had another thing that was wrong with him, another thing he couldn’t fix straight away. “Insomnia?”

“I’m not diagnosing you,” Galina said to him with a knowing smile, like she could read every single damn thought in his head. “But like people with insomnia, you struggle to fall asleep. People find that a weighted blanket helps.”

Ilya didn’t look convinced. “It sounds stupid.”

“It’s meant to help ground you, make you feel calmer,” Galina continued as though Ilya hadn’t spoken. It made his lips twitch up a little. “Think of it like a rock, keeping you in place and stopping you from getting swept away in your own thoughts.”

“So you are a poet now?” Ilya asked.

“I’m only suggesting you consider it,” Galina said with a shrug of her shoulders. “Problems with your sleep can have both mental and physical side effects. As a hockey player, I know that is something you’d want to keep on top of.”

Ilya didn't disagree straight away this time, simply nodding his head.

"We can discuss other options too," Galina assured him. "There are other things and ways to help."

"Maybe I am just a night owl and all of this is pointless," Ilya said, but it sounded just as weak out loud as it did in his head.

"Maybe," Galina smiled with that knowing look again. "We can discuss it in our next session."

...

It's meant to help ground you, make you feel calmer.

The words replayed in his head on the drive back home. He wasn't sure why they stuck but they did, playing on a loop over and over again as he drove through the streets of Ottawa in his weather-sensible car (he had become just as boring as Shane).

A small smile worked its way onto his face when he noticed Shane's car already in the garage. He must have already been back from his lunch with his parents.

"Honey, I'm home!" Ilya called out as he walked through the front door, a shit-eating grin on his face as he already imagined Shane's small huff of annoyance and eyeroll at his greeting.

However, his attention was quickly taken by Anya as she ran towards him, tail wagging as she circled around his legs until he eventually crouched down to give her the pets she deserved. He cooed at the happy chirps she made, leaning down to press *one, two, three* kisses to the top of her head before he shrugged off his shoes and coat.

"How are you feeling?" Shane asked as he made his way towards the living room from the kitchen, standing in the doorway and watching with some amusement as Ilya faceplanted straight onto one of the couches.

"Horrible," Ilya said with a dramatic sigh. "So bad. So scary. I might never be the same again, Hollander."

Shane rolled his eyes and Ilya was grateful that he lifted his head in time to see it. "Glad to see that therapy hasn't ruined your theatrics."

"I do not know what that word means so you are wrong," Ilya bit back, letting out another heavy sigh as he turned so he was laying on his back. He glanced to the side to find Anya staring back at him. "Look at this, *moya printsessa*, your father does not love me anymore. He does not care."

“Stop telling her lies,” Shane huffed.

“It is the truth,” Ilya countered, trying and failing to bite back his smile. “Look how far you are! You hate me!”

“You know, you could always ask for affection like a normal person,” Shane mused as he made his way across the room, patting Anya like she deserved before straddling Ilya’s lap.

“You did not marry me because I am boring like normal person, Hollander,” Ilya shot back, letting out a happy sigh as the familiar weight of his husband on his lap settled on him. “You love me how I am.”

Shane’s face softened. “Yeah, I really do.”

“Sappy,” Ilya teased.

“I don’t even want to know how you know that word,” Shane grumbled as he leaned down to kiss the smug smirk off Ilya’s face. He let out a wistful sigh as Ilya’s arms wound around him, keeping him close as Ilya deepened the kiss.

It’s meant to help ground you, make you feel calmer.

The words flashed through his mind again as Shane settled further on top of him, not bothering to try and hold his weight off Ilya as he started to grind his hips down. There was something about how unspoken all of it was, how Shane could trust Ilya to take his weight and knew it was something he wanted. There was something about the fact that despite how stupid he thought it was at first, he could start to see it.

He could see why people would want something to ground them. He could see how it made them feel calmer.

Ilya was panting by the time he pulled away, just enough for his forehead to be pressed against Shane’s as his hands ran up and down his sides. He took in the sight of his equally flustered husband with his rosy cheeks and slightly glazed over eyes, squirming on his lap like he wanted something (Ilya’s dick) but was too shy to admit it just yet.

And yet, even with the heat pooling in his stomach and his dick hardening in his jeans, there was still something about the position they were in that made that tightness in his chest return. In a way he finally understood.

“I love sleeping with you,” Ilya confessed, the words whispered against Shane’s lips. His voice was lower than usual, a little raspier too. But it was still soft in a way that it only ever was when he was talking to or about Shane.

“Yeah, me too,” Shane replied, breathless and a little impatient. “That’s kinda what I was hoping we were doing right now.”

“No, I mean—” Ilya snorted because he couldn’t help himself, the fondness he had for the boy on top of him only growing as he cupped Shane’s face in his hands and smiled up at him. “I love sleeping *with* you. Proper sleeping. In bed. Not sex.”

“Oh,” Shane murmured, his lips parting a little in surprise before his gaze softened. “I love sleeping with you too.”

“Good,” Ilya hummed, nodding a little as he leaned in to kiss Shane because he couldn’t help himself, delighted in the way his husband eagerly leaned into it before he pulled back. “Because you are my weighted blanket.”

Shane blinked. “What?”

“Is new rule in our marriage. You don’t get a choice.”

Shane’s confusion grew. “Are you speaking English right now or—”

“Shhh, I’m trying to sleep with you, Hollander,” He grinned, teasing and wolfish and distracting enough for Shane to put up little fight as Ilya kept one hand on his face and the other travelled down to squeeze his ass. “Stop trying to ruin the sexy moment with your questions.”

And, for what it was worth, Ilya didn’t think he had ever slept better than their impromptu shared nap on the couch with Shane sprawled out on top of him, better than any weighted blanket he could ever buy.

End Notes

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