

the same in the light

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the same in the light

by [aspiringtoeloquence](#)

Summary

There was a time when Shane felt like he had only really even seen Ilya in semi-darkness: the lights on the Vegas strip, a dimly lit hotel room, the shitty fluorescence of the stairway outside the condo where they'd meet in Montreal.

It's not true, of course. He saw Ilya on the well-lit ice before anywhere else, in front of crowds and cameras, on red carpets and stages. But for years it had felt like the real Ilya was the one he got glimpses of in the stolen hours before one of them had to leave.

Ilya is beautiful in the light.

Or: childhood bedrooms, chickpea-flour pasta, and early morning workouts.

Notes

Title is from an early chapter of The Long Game (p34, Ichecked).

This was largely written before I had even read TLG, so is spoiler-free, as is everything else I have written in this fandom up to this point.

(Also, sorry again, Buffalo.)

As always, idoltina is the wind beneath my wings.

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

There was a time when Shane felt like he had only really even seen Ilya in semi-darkness. The lights on the Vegas strip, a dimly lit hotel room, the shitty fluorescence of the stairway outside the condo where they'd meet in Montreal.

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He remembers thinking it in the hospital, the light from the window illuminating Ilya from behind like a fresco of a saint – he hadn't been able to come up with the word fresco, not on the drugs they were giving him for his collarbone, so he hasn't said it.

At the cottage, Ilya took the remote for the blinds out of his hand, threw it over his shoulder, and pushed Shane against the window, into the light of day. It had felt... real then, in a way that was new and terrifying, but good. Hot. Right.

But the light of the fire, the reading lamps near the couches, the light of his phone as they talk when they're apart: Shane has seen Ilya in all of them, watched him glow and reflect every ray he is allowed. Moonlight looks good on him.

Long after the sun set over the lake, they'd stay out, and being alone with Ilya, wrapped in moonlight and a blanket, is probably the most real and alive Shane has ever felt.

He often thinks about it now, when they're further away from each other than feels reasonable, and god, it's only two hours, how had they done 300 miles – twice the distance and a border – for the better part of a year? He saw Ilya three days ago, a two-day trip to Ottawa that was thinly justified by doing foundation work that could have happened over the phone, and he already feels itchy with the desire to have him in his arms again.

Ilya is a little tipsy from dinner at his parents' house, staying in Shane's room so he doesn't have to drive the ten minutes home. They're talking, and Ilya is only using the reading lamp on the nightstand, so he's bathed in a soft glow on one side of his face. Shane likes to think he can catch the moonlight from the window, but in truth it's probably too cloudy anyway, and the blinds are fully drawn.

"– is a very good idea, even so, but you already know this." Ilya is settled, the sheets pulled up to his stomach, which Shane catches the occasional glimpse of as he moves around. "All my ideas are good, we can agree, yes?"

His tone is bright, but Shane knows him better than that. Shane makes a playfully doubtful noise, which Ilya ignores. "Think of it this way: you're done with Toronto, at least. You have a week at home."

"Good riddance, Dallas Fucking Kent," Ilya says darkly, and if he was on the ice Shane knows he would have spit. Shane had caught most of the game, and it had been rough.

Ottawa's defence had been asleep at the wheel, and even with a Toronto player in the penalty box for most of it, Ilya hadn't been able to stem the tide. A 4-2 loss hurt, even though Ottawa has still had their highest scoring season in years. And yeah, Toronto's star center is maybe the worst human being in the league (a dubious honor), so. No great loss being done with him for the season. They won't make the playoffs; Toronto's win over Ottawa is an anomaly, and they haven't gotten past the second round in years. Fuck Dallas Kent indeed.

"At least you aren't going to Buffalo in the middle of winter," Shane offers. "Hayden knows a guy who got traded there last year, and he's already warned me that shit is gonna be bleak."

"Mmm," Ilya looks thoughtful. "Is like being sent to Siberia." He sighs, scratches his fingers through his hair. "I am glad you will be here soon."

"I know it wasn't great last night," Shane says eventually, "but you kicked ass at home last week, and if the Sentinels are playing the same way they have been –"

"It will be a good game," Ilya agrees, his jaw tight. "Their goalie is asleep on the wheel this season, but it is hard, you know? At practice, they show me what they can do, but these last few games..."

"It sucks. I know." At the professional level, losing streaks are a statistical inevitability. Shane knows the numbers. In a long career, you aren't always going to come out on top. There are going to be slumps, issues with teammates, health problems that get in the way. There are gonna be days where everything should go well, but it doesn't. Ottawa has, frankly, been on a multi-year streak of losing-to-okay games, and before they signed Ilya, no one even thought to rate them seriously as contenders.

It's hard not to feel like he's done this to Ilya, forcing him to leave a team that loved him – that followed him to the cup – for a place he knew no one and that had no winning record to build from. "I'm sorry."

"Is not your fault." Ilya blinks, and the small smile that appears feels like a gift. "They will be good. I know this, is different from Boston. A challenge." His smile widens. "I am very brave to make such a change. But there are benefits, you know?"

Shane allows the shift. He likes the way the corners of Ilya's mouth tilt as he asks. "Many benefits?"

"Yes, is much less traffic."

"You fucking –"

"Very much less time on commute, and very nice couple have me over for dinner."

"They must like you."

"I tell them no, but they insist. Say their son is very cute, and I should meet him."

Shane laughs. "Oh yeah?"

"Mhmm. I am very much interested in these freckles he has, you know."

"I'm pretty sure he's interested in you too."

"Embarrassing for him. But understandable. I am big catch." Ilya gives him an appraising look. "I think you should take off your shirt."

"I am not having sex with you right now," Shane tells him with very little conviction. "You are sitting in my parents house."

"We have had sex in this bed," Ilya points out. Which is true, but only because they stayed over a couple of times during the holidays, and also because Shane's parents were very busy with social engagements and whatever else they got up to.

"That was different." Shane clears his throat, defensive. "This is... we were both there. And my parents were distracted."

"What, you are going to tell me that you have never jerked off in this room?" Ilya's eyes are knowing. "You lived here until training camp, yes?"

Shane had lived there until he needed to be in Ottawa fulltime, and spent most of his offseasons there until the cottage was built. All of which Ilya knows. "Yes."

"I think you have spent many nights in this bed," he continues, and Shane absolutely knows where this is going. "I think you would be here, with your cute little pajamas, and you would think about this handsome player you had met."

"You mean the Russian asshole who smelled like cigarettes and ignored clearly labelled no smoking signs?"

"I was no good at reading English then, you know this."

"A picture of a cigarette with a line through it is pretty universal, Ilya."

Like he does every time it's convenient to suddenly lose fluency in English, Ilya shrugs helplessly. "How do I know your Canadian rules? Anyway, I think that after you met me, you came back here, yes?"

"... Yes."

"And after the draft, and the commercial shoot..." Ilya pulls the phone closer. "Sitting here, with all your soft blankets... tell me, lyubimyy, did you think about me?"

"Actively avoided it, actually," is the truth, however pathetic it may be. Even after all this time, Shane expects it to ache a little, but Ilya just smirks.

“Yes, I know, you did not understand yet, me also, but –” he stretches with a deliberate casualness that makes Shane want to lick his clavicle. “I think that you were not always successful, yes?”

Shane is fairly confident that if he puts on his glasses he can derail this entire line of questioning, but something about the softness of Ilya’s tone makes Shane feel honest. “No, you’re – yeah, I – I thought about you a lot.”

Ilya tilts his head, purses his lips and waits.

Shane curls his fingers into the sheets. “I guess I... wondered about what you were doing a lot.”

“Did you imagine it?”

“What?”

“Me, thinking of you.”

Of course he had. Shane at eighteen – and twenty, and yeah, definitely older too – hadn’t known what the hell to do with his attraction towards Ilya Rozanov, but his hormones had definitely had other ideas. “Maybe.”

“Of course you did.”

Shane smiles. “I did think about my hands on you.”

“Yes?” Ilya’s eyes are bright with interest. “Where did you think about touching me, Shane Hollander?”

“Mostly knocking the smarm out of you.”

“The what?”

“Smarm.”

“Smarm is not real word,” Ilya accuses. “You make this up.”

“I didn’t. I think it’s a combination. Like, charm and... actually, I never really thought about it.”

“English is a very stupid language.”

This is a point Shane can’t really ever argue with. “Are you enjoying my childhood room’s decor?” There isn’t a lot of old stuff out anymore; Shane uses it often enough that it has evolved with him, to an extent. It still feels a little like a time capsule; the boy who lived there and the man that went back are different from who he is now. And who is there now: his boyfriend, his rival, his partner; as Ilya has said often to him ‘many things can be true.’

“Yes, Ilya, I used to think about you while I jerked off in my bed.” Shane says flatly. Ilya looks delighted.

“Maybe while you use your *thing* also...”

“Not in my parents’ house!” Shane is scandalized at the thought.

“Splitting yourself open, thinking of me...” Ilya moans, and even though Shane knows from experience the distance between his parents room and his – almost the length of the house, he can’t help but shush him a little.

“You make my life more difficult.”

“But do I make it *hard*?” Ilya asks, and again, the smile feels so warm, impish, and beautiful in the light.

Shane sighs; it is not an unhappy sound. “Take off your clothes.”

Ilya has sent him three “you want to fuck him so bad it makes you look stupid” memes from god knows where on the internet, one of which is a photoshopped image of the two of them in a face-off, staring into each others eyes. He would feel a little more paranoid about it existing if he didn’t also know that there are similar ones of a variety of players, including several of Hayden and Marleau from after Hayden dropped gloves when Shane got his concussion.

Shane is driving to Ottawa after practice, just in time to catch the coverage of the Admirals game against Philly, which he has absolutely no intention of watching.

Well, maybe they’ll put it on the TV. Shane can’t promise he’ll actually perceive anything happening on the screen, though. He’s a man with ambition.

His phone buzzes.

*Smarm comes from “oily”.
Even the word people do not know why it becomes this.
English should be illegal.*

Is there a better Russian word?

I can think of many Russian words for you.

Yeah? Tell me.

You are staying over, yes?

Yes. Maybe 2 nights? Think I can push a meeting.

*I am going to –
what is it?
whine and dine?*

You mean wine and dine.

No. But is divided effort. I will dine. 🍆🍑

*That reminds me, do you have kale?
I have an idea for juice/smoothie.*

I am throwing my blender in the river.

*Afraid I can't stay somewhere without full amenities.
So...*

[image2836]

*But you may file complaint about service anyway.
(if not enough leaves)
Manager will get back to you in 2-4 weeks.*



Ilya has chickpea flour pasta cooking when Shane arrives, and it is only by chance that they remember it's on the stove before they cause some kind of incident. The way Ilya touches him always feels hungry, after an absence, but Shane knows they're of the same ilk, in this way: he doesn't really fully understand the idea of love languages, but touch has always been a way they can connect with little artifice (alright, *some* artifice for like, eight years, but still).

They aren't even fully naked yet when Ilya's face bobs up from where it was creating a sizable hickey on Shane's hip. Shane can't help the twitch that cants his hips forward, and Ilya makes an instinctual move to return before – "Fuck. Stove."

It's not on fire, but that's the best that can be said of the pasta. The low-carb stuff can be

particular, and Shane appreciates that Ilya doesn't complain (although the prospect of imminent orgasms probably helps).

"Do you miss the cars?" Shane asks as Ilya refills his glass of wine. He's been wondering.

Ilya sips, then shrugs. "No. I still have my favorites. And I did not get to drive them so much anyway, as you know. They were becoming more... decorative." He gestures to Shane's glass. "Is okay? I have ginger ale, if you prefer."

Shane waves his hand. "No, it's good. I was just... focusing." He's done eating, but feels like he needs to do something with his hands. Ilya's hand appears, palm up, and Shane drops his fork to take it, grateful. "I remember how much you loved them. That's all."

Ilya's fingers trace a circle on his palm. "I loved them, yes. Is true," he admits. "I loved to go fast, and the purr of the engine. But I still do so, and now..." his smile turns predatory. "I can hear that sweet purr other places now, yes?"

"So I'm a car engine now?"

Ilya wrinkles his nose and chuckles. "When I turn you on, maybe." He gestures to the empty plate. "More? Or you are done."

"I'm good. Thank you." While Ilya takes the plates, dropping a kiss to his hair on the way, Shane stretches, letting the tension in his right shoulder dissipate until Ilya returns. It's so rare for them to be able to have a normal, leisurely dinner mid-season. When Ilya pulls him to the couch Shane settles comfortably in his lap, the taste of the wine on Ilya's tongue somehow sweeter than from the glass.

Shane wakes early, but Ilya has clearly been up for a while, a scrap of paper that says "In gym" with a messy scribbled heart left on the empty pillow. He takes his time, stretching the sleep out of his bones, the pleasant ache of sex last night in his thighs.

He pulls on a shirt of Ilya's and a pair of sweats that seem like his size, brushing his teeth and gravitating towards the kitchen, where an only slightly separated green smoothie is waiting in the fridge.

Shane loves this man.

He takes the drink down to the gym, a room probably built to be a living room or something in a previous life. Ilya had mirrors put in, along with ridiculously expensive lights he can control from his phone. When Shane arrives, Ilya is lying on a weight bench (there are two) listening to a podcast. He catches Shane's eye in the mirror, and he sits up. "Good morning, moya zhizn."

"Utro dobroye," Shane says back, and pauses at Ilya's smirk. "What?"

“You are very cute.” As he reaches the bench, Ilya pulls him down for a kiss.

“Did I say it wrong?”

“No, but Russian lesson is after breakfast.”

“You didn’t eat?”

“I ate.” Ilya’s smile is wicked. “Is not a full, balanced meal, though.”

Shane is half hard already, his body comfortable in the knowledge that what it wants – craves in the long spaces between their stolen time together – is close. So Ilya pressing him into the mat isn’t a surprise, but he makes a token noise of protest all the same. It’s a little undermined by the way he wraps his ankles around his boyfriend’s calves, probably.

“I’ll bet you’re still so open from last night, hmm? Would only take a minute to have you ready for me again.”

Ilya’s mouth on his neck is, historically, not the greatest indicator for Shane’s ability to think.

“Or maybe you want my mouth this time, hmm?” The cushion of the mat is enough that Shane’s wrists press easily in, Ilya only letting up on the pressure to pull off the shirt Shane had just grabbed. They tend to stay away from obvious marks, but more often now Shane doesn’t care; let his teammates know he has someone who wants him like this. That *loves* him, *wants* him enough to make a life together however they can.

He pulls Ilya’s mouth off his chest – a heroic effort. “Kiss me, I need you to – it’s so – yes, please – Ilya...”

“I know.” Ilya swallows his moans, one hand anchored on his chest, and god, how did Shane survive weeks without this? How the hell had he survived *years*? “Lyubimyy mo– let me –”

The roll of their hips is familiar, steady and real, and they have time today – a full day of this, of uninterrupted time. Shane didn’t think he would be close this fast, but it’s been, what, a couple of minutes since he came down from bed, and what a goddamn way to wake up –

This, of course, is when Ilya’s phone rings from the weight bench. Shane vaguely registers that it’s a Beyoncé song (*Who Runs that motherfucker?*), but he tightens his grip on Ilya, who has frozen. “If you pick that up,” he says, calmer than he feels, canting his hips to emphasize his point. “I am going to kill you.”

“Is your mother,” Ilya says, making no effort to move. “Is her ringtone.”

“Do not –” He kisses Ilya again, sweeter this time. “She can wait five minutes.”

“Five minutes?”

“Ten. An hour. Whatever.” It is only seven o’clock in the fucking morning, probably, *jesus christ*. Shane moves, quick enough to startle someone who wasn’t the number one draft pick, and pins Ilya to the mat. “I think I can help you focus.”

Beyoncé cuts out, and Ilya adjusts his hips so Shane can feel how hard he is underneath him.

“Dusha moya...you are so...” Ilya’s hands are down the back of his sweats, his mouth laving at Shane’s ear. “Always a fucking vision like this, only you can make me – crazy for you –”

Shane isn’t going to need anything beyond this to come – Ilya’s mouth and cock against his, hands pulling his hips forward like they’ve forgotten their bodies were ever apart.

He watches Ilya come – he’s an expert now, on the way Ilya’s face can loosen with want and surprise every time. Ilya’s arms stay tight around him, and less than a minute later Ilya’s leg folds around him just the right way and the friction as Shane comes makes his moan echo in the quiet space.

They stay there for a moment, and then Shane lets himself drop to Ilya’s side. Ilya kisses him on the nose.

“You should really call my mom back after you shower,” Shane offers, and Ilya’s snort as he pulls Shane into his chest makes the last two weeks of an empty bed worth it.

The sun is almost fully up by the time they’ve showered, a relic of winter that feels like it follows them, for now. The light is diffused by the clouds, any pinks and oranges absorbed into the night left behind. Ilya talks to his mom on the phone, sitting on the couch with Shane’s head resting on his thigh, a hand idly brushing through Shane’s barely dry hair. Ordinarily he’d be paying more attention to the conversation – he’ll want to know what they’re up to later, but for the moment he’s sated and happy watching the morning light touch Ilya’s smile, their reflections in the coffee table and the dark TV screen.

“Need anything from the store?” Ilya covers the phone to ask, and Shane shakes his head, lets the ease in his body slip his eyes closed, trusting the daylight to stay.

All he needs is this.

End Notes

This started as a reflection on the whole moonlight/sunlight dichotomy... and here we are.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!