

baby, it's all relative

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baby, it's all relative

by [sugaslesbianbestie](#)

Summary

Shane knows he's probably overstepping. They're supposed to be having a good time at the cottage, relaxing. But it's been on his mind, he feels it would explain some things about Ilya. "Like, would you say he was hard on you, too?"

Ilya squeezes his eyes closed. "I do not know," he says stiffly, shrugging his shoulders again as if he could physically shake off his unease. Yes, Ilya thinks, of course his father was hard on him.

or shane and ilya have a conversation about how ilya had an emotionally abusive father and experienced childhood trauma

Notes

I looked at ilya by the end of the season and decided that's my trauma twin ! this fic and series honestly is inspired by me texting my sister after episode 6 to literally say I wish ilya was real so I could sign him up for trauma therapy and then I started thinking even more abt his trauma and here we are !

I am projecting a bit on ilya but I 100% can back up my c-ptsd claims okay !!

Im so very kind and started this fic with Ilya talking abt how happy he is before i force him to examine his childhood 😊

the title is from thumbs by lucy dacus, the end specifically just fits the theme sm !

"I wanna take your face between my hands and say
"You two are connected by a pure coincidence
Bound to him by blood, but baby, it's all relative
You've been in his fist ever since you were a kid
But you don't owe him shit even if he said you did.""

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

Ilya isn't sure the last time he felt so happy.

He can't believe he initially said no, that he wasn't going to come, that he was going to go back to Russia. Even if it's only two weeks, it's the best two weeks of his life at least so far, he's sure.

They'd been in the lake all morning, or at least Ilya had been. Shane once again spent most of the time sitting on the rock, watching Ilya with an expression that can only be described as enamored. Ilya felt like a kid again, seeing how long he could hold an underwater handstand or hold his breath in general.

Shane was not a fan of the last game so Ilya mostly stuck to the handstands. He's improved, if he says so himself, and hopes next year's All Star game is in a warm city so he can add handstands to his list of competitions to do with the other players' kids.

They've been back inside for a while now, already showered and eaten lunch. They're stretched out on the couch again and Ilya's foot occasionally brushes Shane's due to his fidgeting. Shane doesn't seem to mind, eyes glued to his phone screen.

"You look happy," Shane says without looking up from his phone. The smile on his face is so soft it makes Ilya's heart clench.

"I am happy." The admission comes easily. Even if they hadn't promised to be honest during their time together, Ilya would've happily informed Shane of it. Things felt so *good*.

Shane sets his phone down and finally looks up at Ilya. Ilya smiles widely when they make eye contact and Shane smiles widely in return. "Good," Shane tells him. "You deserve to be happy."

His words make Ilya's smile falter, just slightly. He wants to be happy. Wishes he felt happy more often than he did, truly. But he's not sure he believes he *deserves* it. But he wants it.

"Mhmm," Ilya hums, hoping he doesn't seem fully unconvinced to Shane. "You deserve it, too."

Shane's smile has dimmed a little. "Thank you, but I mean it, Ilya."

All Ilya can do is nod.

"Were you — were you happy a lot, as a kid?" Shane asks and Ilya finds himself sinking further back into the couch.

It's a hard to answer question. Not a simple yes or no answer. "I was happy playing hockey, and usually when I was with my mother."

Sometimes, as much as Ilya loved her, he had found himself sad when they were together. He wanted her to be happy. She was so beautiful, so kind. Ilya remembers watching her eyes dim more and more through the years.

He hated his father more and more through the years in part because of it.

Shane seems to be full of questions today. He's asked a few, over the last week or so they'd been at the cottage. Ilya suspects he's peppering a few each day so he doesn't overwhelm him all at once. "What kind of things did you do with her?"

Ilya takes a moment before answering. "I remember walking around with her a lot, when I was really little. Sometimes we'd find small parks, and she'd watch me go down the slides. But that was usually when my father was home from work." It was easier, just not being around him. He couldn't yell or pick arguments with them if they weren't there.

Shane looks focused as he listens, his beautiful smile from before replaced with a slight frown. "You guys tried not to be around him? Your dad, I mean."

Ilya offers another small shrug and nod of his head. "It was easier, to not be around him most of the time. He was not pleasant."

It takes a few moments for Shane to formulate a response. "Well, I don't know a lot about abuse, but—" Ilya cuts Shane off quickly.

"Not abuse. He never hit me, or her." At least he never saw his father hit his mother, never saw left over marks. "Dysfunctional," Ilya offers instead, saying the word slowly to make sure he gets it right. Marlow had used it years ago when Ilya said his relationship with his family wasn't exactly normal or happy.

Shane furrows his brow, clearly thinking over his next words. It makes Ilya even more nervous. He doesn't like this conversation, doesn't want to be having it.

"You said your father was hard on your mom," is what Shane opens with. Ilya nods in agreement. "What did you mean by that?"

Ilya shrugs. "He was always complaining. About the house, about her, about me and my brother. Nothing she did was enough." He can still hear his father in his head, berating his mother for the house being '*disgusting*' when one of the boys left an empty glass on the counter.

Shane nods slowly. "I think, maybe, and I could totally be wrong because obviously I don't really know everything and we've only talked about it a little bit, that your father was emotionally abusive."

Ilya freezes, keeping his eyes glued to his lap. "He was angry and unhappy." It is an understatement, but Ilya thinks it gets to the point. "But like I said, he was not violent."

Shane nods again, still picking his words carefully. "There are other kinds of abuse besides just physical, you know?" Ilya hums but doesn't say anything else.

"Like mental abuse, and neglect. Or emotional abuse." Shane pauses like he's waiting for Ilya to say something but Ilya remains silent, so Shane continues. "It sounds like your dad was

emotionally abusive to your mom, at least. If he was constantly finding things to put her down for and you all had to walk on eggshells around him.”

He does nod slightly at that, still refusing to meet Shane’s eyes. “Maybe,” he offers softly. “Maybe he was to her.” Maybe Shane is right. Ilya does believe that it was part of why she was so sad all the time.

“I think,” Shane continues again, even softer than before, like he’s scared he’ll scare Ilya away. “Maybe he was to you, too.”

Shane knows he’s probably overstepping. They’re supposed to be having a good time at the cottage, relaxing. But it’s been on his mind, he feels it would explain some things about Ilya. “Like, would you say he was hard on you, too?”

Ilya squeezes his eyes closed. “I do not know,” he says stiffly, shrugging his shoulders again as if he could physically shake off his unease. *Yes, Ilya thinks, of course his father was hard on him.*

His father blamed Russia’s loss at the Olympics seemingly entirely on him, despite the fact that their goalie was injured and none of the players knew how to play well together. That team had not been compatible. Apparently Ilya should have been able to single handedly fix both issues.

Ilya thinks of the night of the draft. He had been first pick. And yet his father couldn’t accept a compliment about him. No, he made sure to put Ilya down publicly instead.

Made sure to put Ilya in his place.

Try as he might, he can’t recall a time where his father was happy with him.

“You call yourself lazy a lot. I haven’t seen you be lazy, not really.” Shane keeps going like he’s not already making Ilya reexamine a million memories. “Did your dad call you lazy often?”

Ilya chuckles, a humorless sound. “Was his favorite way to describe me.” Even at the end, when he still had moments of lucidity, he still called Ilya lazy as if he wasn’t working his ass off to financially support him and his brother’s family for years.

Shane frowns and Ilya finds himself wanting to make him happy again, apologize for his answer and change the topic. Ilya does not get the chance to.

“He was wrong about you,” Shane mutters like he can’t help himself. He clears his throat before carrying on. “Was that all? The worst of it?”

“No, I guess. He didn’t just call me lazy, it was also ungrateful, selfish, useless.” More insults than Ilya can count, than he wants to sit and translate into English.

When Ilya looks over at Shane again, he finds the others jaw set tight. Ilya nudges his foot against his and watches Shane’s features relax again. “Is okay,” Ilya tells him. “Was just words.”

Shane is quiet for a moment, just long enough for Ilya to wonder how exactly he managed to mess up this conversation he doesn't even want to be having.

When he finally speaks, Shane sounds *sad*. "But it's not just words, right? 'Cause you took it to heart."

Ilya loses his fight not to look away. "Took to heart?" He thinks he knows what Shane means, but the explanation will buy him more time to think of how to respond.

"Means you took it seriously, it has impact or meaning to you," Shane explains. "You call yourself lazy to this day because you internalized it and took it as a fact."

"Maybe it is a fact," Ilya mumbles, feeling the need to argue.

Shane stares at him until Ilya stares back.

"Back it up, then," Shane challenges. "Give me evidence that you're lazy. If it's a fact, there's proof."

Ilya blinks quickly, taken aback by the demand.

Shane barely gives him a chance to reply before continuing. "'Cause you know, I have evidence of the opposite. I know how fucking hard you work. You aren't lazy, Ilya."

The desire to argue is still there, to tell Shane that he's wrong and Ilya *is* as lazy as his father always said. But Ilya also knows it is an argument he would lose.

If he allows himself to really think about it, he knows Shane is right. Ilya can think of more evidence that he is not lazy than that he is.

He still wants to argue. Feels like he needs to argue that no, Shane is wrong, his father is right. How can it be wrong when it feels so true?

Ilya's chest feels tight and he knows tears are threatening to spring up.

Shane leans back against the pillows on the couch, holding his arms out silently. Ilya moves without needing to be told, crawling forward to close the distance between them. He settles himself over Shane, blanketing the other as he rests his cheek against his chest.

Ilya breathes a sigh of relief as Shane's arms wrap around him, holding him tight to his chest. "It's okay," Shane speaks softly, fingers running through Ilya's blond curls.

"That's the thing, with people. Words do matter." Ilya knows what Shane is saying is true. Ilya himself has a habit of using his words to get reactions. "But they especially matter when you're young and it's being said by an authority figure, like your parent."

Focusing on the sound of Shane's heartbeat helps Ilya ground himself again.

"Why do you know so much?" Ilya grumbles. "You have perfect family." He doesn't mean it to be dismissive or jealous. It is a known fact that Shane has a wonderful relationship with his

parents.

Ilya has seen Shane with his parents throughout the years, how they take care of him even as an adult. Hell, he got to see the Hollander family in action up close and personal only a few days ago. Their family dynamics are practically polar opposites.

It had been hard, the last few months — *years*, coming to terms with the fact that once his father died Ilya would have no familial connections.

It's only been a few official days, anything could change, but Ilya thinks he might've gained a new family. While it's clear Shane's parents are still adjusting, they already treat Ilya so *well*.

No wonder they raised such a wonderful, caring son. Ilya knows, at his core, that Shane is right about his father. There is no way Yuna and David Hollander would ever speak to Shane the way his father had spoken to him his entire life.

"We learned about it in school," Shane answers matter of factly. "As part of the health stuff in high school they covered different types of abuse. Since people were starting to date or whatever."

A chuckle escapes Ilya's lips before he can stop it. "I don't remember anything from high school." He's not attempting to change the subject or distract, he's genuinely amused at Shane's earnest recollection.

Shane tsk's, but leans forward and presses a kiss to the top of Ilya's head. "Your brain is filled with hockey and *Fast and Furious* quotes."

Ilya smiles wide, shifting slightly to look up at Shane. "And *you*. Hockey, *Fast and Furious* quotes, and you."

"Oh, it's an honor," Shane says with a teasing roll of his eyes.

Then, Ilya watches as his face flushes and Shane looks away from him. "I also did some research, by the way. Not just what I remembered from school, but that was my starting point."

Ilya's eyes widen. Research? To have a conversation with Ilya? *I love him so fucking much*, is the first thought that runs through Ilya's head. "Is that why you were so focused on your phone this afternoon?"

Shane manages to blush even more, nodding slowly. "Yeah." And then he quickly adds, "Don't make fun of me."

Ilya's gaze softens. "Would never," he promises, then quickly amends, "Not about this." That gets another smile from Shane. "I feel special, and loved, why would I make fun of you for that?"

Shane squeezes Ilya tighter to his chest. "I love you. I'm sorry if I overstepped, I know it's not a pleasant thing to talk or think about and we're supposed to be relaxing and having a

good time.”

It’s a bit of an understatement, to say it’s unpleasant. And maybe Ilya isn’t fully ready to completely address or unpack the things Shane has brought up, but he still feels *seen* and *understood* by Shane in a way he hasn’t felt with anyone else.

“It’s okay,” Ilya responds, and means it. “I love you, too. Thank you for caring, and thinking enough to research for me.”

When Shane responds, he sounds fierce. “Always. I’m *always* thinking about you.”

Ilya loves him so much he feels like it truly might kill him.

“I was also thinking,” Shane continues, sounding more confident now. “My mom taught me something when I was younger that I think might help you.”

This causes Ilya to raise an eyebrow, looking at Shane to continue. “This is kinda what I was researching, too. To see if it was something that might help you.”

Ilya feels a little apprehensive, but he trusts Shane. “Okay. What is it?”

Shane cracks a small smile. “We kinda already did it,” he admits sheepishly. “It’s checking the facts. My mom taught me because I overthink so much.”

And that had been one of the first things Ilya truly learned about Shane, just how much he thought all the time.

“I would get really upset because I thought I messed up a social interaction and my brain would always think of the worst possible outcomes.” Yes, Ilya had seen him do this quite a few times.

Shane still looks a little sheepish when he continues. “Like, obviously no one is going to hate me forever and think I’m stupid for saying ‘hey’ instead of ‘hi’, but it *felt* true, and I would stress out because of that. So my mom told me to look at the facts and see if they support what my brain says will happen, and it usually doesn’t.”

Ilya can’t help but smile slightly again. “You are clever, like your mother. Is good idea, and you already made me try it.” Not only had they tried it, but it *had* worked.

It will take time, like all things, to really make a difference. But it did, at least for a moment, make Ilya rethink his ideas about himself.

“I thought you might be more open to actively trying it if I showed you you could do it already,” Shane admits. “I know for you it’s not really overthinking and more so just what you think about yourself, but I think it could still help with the negative view you have of yourself sometimes. I’m sorry if you feel tricked.”

Ilya shakes his head slightly before settling back down, pressing his cheek to Shane’s chest again. “I do not feel tricked. I feel lucky, to be loved by someone so clever that knows me so well. I will try it.”

He would try anything for Shane, if it made him happy.

And maybe Ilya will try it for himself, too, to be happy.

End Notes

sorry if there's any errors or mistakes or anything I did write this out of order but I reread it a couple times to make sure it flowed okay. however I did get to the point where I read it so much I started to hate it so again I may have missed some things lol.

I hope u enjoyed !! thank u v much for reading <3

like I said at the start I want to explore more of Ilya's trauma, here are some of the other concepts I am thinking abt writing abt so far to give u a bit of a vibe of what we're in for here:

- an exploration of Ilya and his brother's relationship and how growing up in an abusive household affects siblings differently and the different ways siblings end up coping or behaving in response.

- Ilya trying to explain the inherent trauma of having a mentally ill parent and how you /know/ even as a child it's not their choice but it's still so fucking scary and it absolutely affects your development, especially in Ilya's case of finding his mother's body.

- Shane trying to convince Ilya that it was not only not his job/responsibility to be his mother's support system or somehow save her but how it is literally just not something a child is even capable of. Ilya knows it wasn't anything he did that led to his mother's actions, but it also wasn't anything he /didn't/ do, and that's important to understand as well. possibly ties in with the idea before this one.

- the general nightmare experience of still wanting to be loved and understood by your abusive parent but also knowing they will never change. also the horrors of realizing your parent literally cannot meet your needs but you still have the bone deep need for them to.

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