**Loving in the Light**

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# Loving in the Light

by kaijuerotica

Summary

Shane and Ilya are on their honeymoon. For Shane, every moment is a new discovery of the joys of loving Ilya Rozanov in the light of day.

Notes

Hi, I read Game Changer and both Hollanov books this week on top of rewatching the show like 4x. I'm in DEEP. Have some cute moments of Hollanov on their honeymoon.

Gifting this to ellipsis_truther who I screamed at about this every single day this week.

See the end of the work for more notes

It was an ungodly early hour and Shane found himself sitting at an airport terminal alone.

Ungoldly early flights were nothing new. The alone part was different, though.

Not that he was really alone. He was sitting at the end of a row of black chairs, with a backpack sitting on the chair next to him while he waited for-

“Black coffee,” a familiar accented voice said.

Shane looked up and grinned, accepting the coffee Ilya handed him, along with a chocolate protein bar. “Thanks.” He fought the urge to check the ingredients, reminding himself that he was trying to be chill during the trip. He eyed the other drink Ilya was carrying. Something cold with a thick layer of foam on top, slowly diffusing into the coffee and turning it into a warm brown gradient. “What's that?”

Ilya held it out to him. “You want to try? It has protein.” He said the last part like it was the most tempting thing in the world.

Shane nodded and took the second cup. He took a sip and said, “Oh. That's really good.” It was sweet and creamy, the dark coffee coming in on the back end. “How much protein?”

Ilya shrugged and sat in the chair next to him, demoting the backpack to sitting on the floor. He had a small paper bag as well and opened it to pull out a pastry. It had chocolate oozing out of it and Ilya immediately set it down and licked his thumb where the chocolate had smeared.

Taking advantage of the distraction, Shane grabbed Ilya’s wrist and pulled it over, taking a bite of the croissant. He struggled not to moan. Fuck, that was good.

“Thief!” Ilya exclaimed, pulling his croissant back and taking his own bite, right over where Shane had. “I didn't know bread was in the diet now.” Ilya’s tone was warm and teasing, spoken through a bite of pastry.

*“I'm on vacation,”* Shane said, switching to Russian. *“It doesn't count.”*

Ilya always got this warm, fond look in his eyes when Shane spoke Russian. He knew he was still learning. The syllables still felt awkward on his tongue. Forming more complex sentences still eluded him without considerable forethought. But he was trying to get more used to using it in conversation, and that look in Ilya’s eyes…

*“It's not a vacation,”* Ilya said. *“Medovyy mesyats.”* Shane looked at him quizzically. “Is honeymoon,” Ilya said, switching back to English.

Shane couldn't help the dopey grin that split his face and he looked down to where the black band of the ring sat on Ilya’s finger. It had only gotten back from being resized a few days before and seeing it on his husband's finger still gave him a thrill. Ilya had always been his but now it was like legal or whatever.

It had been just over a month since the wedding. A busy month, at that. The camps had gone well, with an increasingly star-studded roster of NHL greats as coaches. They'd managed to not make out in front of the kids, though poor Ryan Price was once again the victim of walking in on them in an empty locker room when Ilya had Shane pressed against the wall. Poor guy. They needed to get him a bell or something.

There had been a part of Shane - a small part - that wondered if having their secret out would lessen how much he desperately wanted Ilya. Had the secrecy and danger driven that flame between them? Would it be the same now that everyone knew and they'd both been made honest men?

He hadn't needed to be worried. Even now, he'd jump his bones if he could. It was barely after 6 A.M. and Ilya was wearing sweat pants and an old hoody that had long since gone soft with age. Blob fashion, as Shane had called it while putting on essentially the same. They were going to be on the plane for hours, after all. He wanted to be comfortable. And despite this, he couldn't help but eye Ilya hungrily.

“Don't look at me like that, Hollander,” Ilya warned. He didn't even look up from his phone when he said it, making Shane laugh.

“Like what?” Shane asked, feigning innocence.

Ilya looked up at him. “Like we are going to get kicked out and wind up on news.” There was almost a challenge in his voice. Almost.

Shane just laughed again. “Just excited, is all.”

Ilya made an agreeable hum. He finished his croissant and stuffed the pastry bag into the mesh pocket on the side of his backpack, then leaned against Shane and sighed. “Are we there yet?”

Shane pressed a smile into Ilya’s hair and kissed his head. “Almost.”

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The flight was mostly uneventful. They were in first class so they had plenty of space, though a part of Shane thought he wouldn't mind being in coach if it meant Ilya was leaning against him when he nodded off. Still, they were close enough for Ilya to reach for his hand when they hit a bit of turbulence. Shane squeezed it back and pulled it to his lips to kiss Ilya’s fingers. He didn't immediately let go when the turbulence died down.

After a layover in Heathrow, a shorter flight to Spain, and waiting for their bags, they were finally piled into a cab and off to the house they had rented for the two weeks they were in Spain.

And then they were alone. Exhausted, jet-lagged, both in need of a shower. But alone.

They stared at each other, both grinning like idiots, before both moving at the same time to pull the other in for a kiss. Shane's hands immediately started roving, down his chest and over

his hips and settling at his waist, thumbs rubbing the warm flesh at his lower back while the rest of his hands were over the sweatpants and grabbing his ass.

It always felt perfect kissing Ilya. Like home and safety. Over a decade of kissing him and he'd never gotten bored of it once. It just made him want more.

It was only once Ilya started grinding against him that Shane broke the kiss. *"Wait, my love,"* he said in Russian.

Ilya looked so conflicted when he opened his eyes again. "Why should I?" he asked, back in English.

"Because I want a shower so fucking bad," Shane said. He pulled out of Ilya's arms but grabbed his hand.

"Oh," Ilya said, the grin evident in his voice. "Need any help with that?"

Shane laughed and pulled him along. He couldn't wait for Ilya to see the shower in the place he'd found for them.

They got in late by Spain time so they called it a night pretty soon after that. They were both exhausted from the traveling and had plans starting the following evening. Shane came out of the bathroom after brushing his teeth to find Ilya starfishing on the bed in his underwear and nothing else. His eyes were closed but Shane could tell he was still awake. His skin was still flushed and pink from the shower and his curls were just starting to spring back as his hair dried.

Shane crossed around to the other side of the bed where his phone was charging.

"There is email from Farrah," Ilya said. He stretched his arms up and rolled over before opening his eyes, pillowing his chin on his arms.

"Yeah?" Shane said. He unlocked his phone and saw the notification.

"New player code of conduct policy," Ilya said. The words were mumbled, sleepy.

Shane couldn't help but laugh and opened the attachment without reading the email. They'd been expecting something like this, but weren't too worried. "What's it say?" he asked as he scanned the document.

"Players shall refrain from having sex while on league property, inside arenas, or in rented accomodations." Shane didn't even need to look up to hear the eye roll. "Among other things."

"Damn," he said. "Guess we'll have to stick to mouth and hand stuff, then." They'd both been assuming they would be rooming together at away games for the foreseeable future. Even if the league decided they should room separately, Shane really doubted it would be hard to convince his new teammates to swap rooms. If the other option was coming back to find a sock on the doorknob like they were still 18 years old at the juniors, most would gladly trade for some peace and quiet.

Ilya's lips quirked up into a smile but his eyes were closed again. "Is also new conflict of interest policy." Shane could tell Ilya was exhausted because he tended to drop more words when he was tired.

"What's that?" Shane asked as he flicked the lamp off. He had already locked his phone and was getting into bed beside Ilya as he asked.

"Says players must inform about 'intimate personal relationships with competitors.'" Shane huffed out half a laugh and tugged Ilya over to him. Ilya went easily, tangling their limbs together and pressing a kiss to Shane's pec.

"Y'know, Hunter made history and all that but I don't remember them ever sending out new policies about him." He kissed the top of Ilya's head. "We made them get lawyers and HR involved."

Ilya snorted but didn't say anything. Shane smiled to himself then tugged the blanket up a bit more around them and settled in to fall asleep.

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"Ilya, you know I'm not wearing this," Shane said, holding up the confusing combination of straps and buckles.

"Come on, Hollander," Ilya cajoled. "You are gay now, yes? Act like it."

"I'd say I acted like it when I-"

"Yes, we all know how well you suck a dick, *moy stiral'naya mashina,"* Ilya said. ("Washing machine," Shane translated, but Ilya ignored him.) "But we are going out to a gay club in place Scott Hunter called, and I quote, 'Gay Disney World' so act like it." Ilya was only half dressed himself, wearing a pair of tight-fitting pants but nothing on top.

Shane looked down at the harness, considering. "Sorry, but no. Next option."

Ilya rolled his eyes but agreed, turning back to their bags to look for something else. "This, then." He handed Shane a silky button up top just this side of see-through. It was Ilya's but Shane started putting it on immediately. Unfortunately, while Ilya was taller, Shane had him beat out for bulk.

"Not sure this is gonna fit," he said, gesturing to the straining buttons. He'd only gotten it buttoned up to around his nipples and couldn't get the next button to close.

Ilya eyed him appreciatively and undid the straining button, then nodded. "Is perfect."

"Ilya, I don't know about-"

"Is this or divorce," he said with a laugh. Shane rolled his eyes but didn't push it further. Ilya wound up wearing the harness under another shirt that was somehow even more transparent.

They got into the club easily. Shane wasn't sure if it was because they were recognized or because they looked good. And they did look good. Shane had begrudgingly admitted Ilya had been right about the shirt, and Ilya, well. He was Ilya. Of course he looked good.

As they walked in, Shane was immediately overwhelmed by it. The music, the heat, the crush of people. He didn't know where to look, where to go.

“Ilya-” he started, practically yelling over the music.

Ilya slung an arm around his shoulders, leaning in so he could press his lips to Shane's ear. “Don't freak out, sweetheart, we just get some drinks first.”

Shane nearly protested out of habit, but he caught himself and nodded after the slightest hesitation. They'd talked about this before even buying the plane tickets. This wasn't about peak performance or discipline or any of that. This was about having fun with Ilya. He didn't want to get shitfaced but a few drinks to loosen up wouldn't hurt. Probably.

Ilya smiled and nodded back, then led him towards the bar with his arm still around his shoulders. It felt good having it there, the casual reminder that he was *his*. He knew Ilya liked that, the little displays of possessiveness. He wanted others to see, maybe even touch, but *know* they couldn't have him.

“Order for me,” Shane told him when they got up to the bar.

“Dangerous game, Hollander,” he said. Shane just grinned and leaned in to kiss his jaw. No heat or lingering, just a quick peck where he could reach. Because he could do that now. Thousands of miles away or just going about his life in Ottawa. He got to love Ilya Rozanov as openly as he wanted.

Ilya turned to him with a matching smile and leaned in to kiss him properly. It was just as quick but Shane could tell the same thoughts were running through his head.

When the bartender finally got to them, Ilya broke away just long enough to order for them. He popped back up a moment later to hand Shane a shot in a plastic cup and a full glass of something clear with ice in it.

“You know I'm not trying to get shitfaced “ Shane said, even as he took both from him.

“One shot will not make you shitfaced,” Ilya said, now holding his own shot and another glass. “Will just loosen you up. Make you have fun.” He looped his arm through Shane’s as he spoke, holding his own shot. “Please?”

Shane rolled his eyes. “You're lucky you're pretty.”

Ilya cackled and tapped his shot against Shane’s, then they both downed them. Shane’s hiss was drowned out by the music but he didn't have time to dwell on it before Ilya was crowding close with him, sliding an arm up to hang off his shoulder. Shane wrapped an arm around his waist, careful not to spill his drink.

“You think I'm pretty?” Ilya asked.

“Didn't you know I married you for your looks?” Shane said. He brought his glass up to take a sip while Ilya glared at him, but there was no heat. The drink was sweeter than what he would have ordered for himself but it was good. He took another drink.

“Dance with me,” Ilya said.

“Give me time for that shot to kick in first,” Shane said, a genuine flash of panic in his eyes. He'd never been good at dancing. He never knew what to do with his hands or his feet. He wanted to try, for Ilya, but fuck if he wasn't nervous.

Ilya reached for Shane's wrist and brought the glass back to Shane's lips. “Drink more.”

Shane downed his drink faster than he probably should have and allowed himself to be tugged out onto the dance floor. Ilya was pulling him by the hand as he wove between people far more easily than a man his size should be able to. Without warning, Ilya stopped and spun around. He was already moving to the music pounding around them. Shane just stared at him with no idea what he was supposed to do.

Taking pity on him, Ilya slid his arms around Shane's waist and pressed close. “Follow my lead,” he told him, his lips moving against his ear. “Move your hips.” He pushed and lulled at Shane's hips until he started moving with the rhythm. Shane slid his arms up around Ilya’s neck, glad to have something to do with them as he moved against him. He still felt stiff and awkward but the heady proximity of Ilya, along with the alcohol thrumming in his system after a long while without drinking had him loosening up and getting into it. It was electric, being this close to Ilya like this. Surrounded by people who bumped and jostled them, on display and yet so anonymous. He knew there was a chance they'd be recognized, photographed. And god, was it amazing not to care. He pressed his lips to Ilya’s neck, wondering just what he could get away with.

“Don't start anything you can't finish,” Ilya warned. “The line for bathroom looks very long.”

Shane scrunched his nose and nipped at his neck. “Get me another drink?”

Ilya grinned and gave him a sloppy kiss. “Don't go far,” he said and turned to go back to the bar. In his absence, Shane did his best to recreate whatever it was Ilya was doing. Moving his hips, finding a rhythm. He still felt awkward but the alcohol definitely helped him get out of his own head. He wasn't sure how long it was before Ilya returned, appearing as if from nowhere from the crowd of people. His eyes drifted from Shane off to the side, where they turned icy. Shane didn't have time to figure out what that meant before Ilya was shoving a drink in his hands, sliding his own hand into Shane's hair, and kissing him hungrily. Shane grabbed Ilya's waist with his free hand and moaned into the kiss. Shane's brain still hadn't caught up with reality before Ilya pulled back and shot another glare over Shane's shoulder.

“Scaring off competition,” Ilya said.

Shane groaned and dropped his head onto Ilya's shoulder. He liked it when Ilya got possessive. They both knew there was no risk of either of them acting on anything but Ilya still had to stake his claim and Shane was happy to let him.

“This why you wanted to come?” Shane asked.

“Wanted to show you off,” Ilya said. His hand slid down Shane's body and around to grab his ass. “Let everyone see what is mine.”

“Fuck, Ilya,” Shane groaned, continuing to grind against him. This man was perfect and hot as hell and grabbing his ass in a room full of strangers.

The night ended in a tense cab ride back to the house. Shane wanted to climb into Ilya's lap right there but unfortunately that was frowned upon. He paid the cabby, plus a generous tip, then followed Ilya out of the car and followed him closely into the house. The door was pushed closed by the force of Ilya pressing Shane against it and kissing him hungrily. Shane opened up to him instantly, sliding his tongue against Ilya's and rolling his hips.

“Mine,” Ilya said.

*“Vsegda,”* Shane moaned. *Always.* He sucked at Ilya's jaw and down to his neck, nipping at the pulse point as he rolled his hips again. He felt Ilya’s heart speed up against his tongue.

“Should have seen how people were looking at you,” Ilya said. “They wanted you.”

“They wanted both of us,” Shane groaned.

“Damn fucking right.” The way Ilya's accent rolled over the r sound, rumbling in his deep voice, made it sound like a growl and Shane couldn't help the whimper that fell from his lips. “Do you want it?” Ilya asked him. A silly question, but he always loved to hear Shane say it.

“Yes.” He didn't hesitate anymore, hadn't for a very long time.

“Do you *need* it?” he asked.

Shane's head fell back against the door. “Yes, Ilya, fuck.” He was rock hard and they hadn't even gotten their pants off yet.

Ilya ground against him as his hands roamed Shane's body. All at once, Ilya stepped back. Shane almost fell over from the sudden loss of the body pressing his against the door. Shane opened his eyes and struggled to focus them through his daze.

“What ar-”

“Upstairs,” Ilya growled.

Shane almost tripped over his own feet in his rush. Maybe he was drunker than he thought. He didn't care. He hurried up the stairs, checking to make sure Ilya was close behind him. He started undoing the buttons as he went. He was interrupted in trying to get the shirt down his arms by Ilya pinning him to the wall, trapping his arms at his sides while Ilya ravaged his mouth and slid a hand down to rub his straining cock through his underwear. Shane whined into Ilya's mouth and tried to roll his hips but Ilya pulled back, denying him the stimulation.

“Ilya,” he whined. “What?”

“Tell me what you need,” he said.

“Fuck me,” he said. “Please.”

There was a beautiful mischief in Ilya’s eyes as he leaned in and spoke in Russian. *“Tell me again.”*

Shane's head was swimming as he desperately tried to think past his aching cock and the slowly lifting haze of the alcohol. He squeezed his eyes shut and leaned his head back as he searched for the words. *“Fuck me. I need it.”*

He barely had the words out before Ilya grabbed him and flipped them around so he could push him down onto the bed. He was bent over, the tall bed placing him at the perfect height. As Ilya leaned down to help pull the shirt the rest of the way off of Shane's arms, he placed his mouth right next to Shane's ear and said, *“Good boy.”*

Shane shuddered and lifted his hips to let Ilya strip him of his pants. Shane wasn't even sure when Ilya had grabbed the lube but he heard the click of the cap opening and felt the press of Ilya’s fingers against his hole.

“Yes,” he hissed, arching his back. “More.” This was exactly what he needed. No foreplay, no slow build. Quick, brutal, desperate. He needed Ilya inside him like he needed air.

“Greedy,” Ilya said, even as he pushed his fingers in deeper.

“Need you,” Shane said. Then, fighting through the haze, “*Love you.”*

Ilya chuckled low in his ear. “You are playing dirty tonight.”

“Is it working?” Shane asked, then gasped as Ilya added another finger.

“Of course it is.” Ilya nipped at his ear and pulled his fingers out. Shane barely had time to whine at the loss before he heard the click of the lube, the sound of a zipper, then the blunt tip of Ilya’s cock was pressed against his entrance. Fuck, Ilya hadn't even undressed yet, had he?

“Fuck yes,” he groaned and buried his face in the bed as Ilya entered him. He immediately set a brutal pace, fucking Shane with everything he had. He'd been at least a little hard since he and Shane took their first shots and seeing the way other people had looked at Shane had lit a fire inside him. They wanted him. Wanted to touch him, to fuck him. But only Ilya got to do that. Only Ilya got to hear Shane beg so sweetly in clumsy Russian syllables. Only Ilya got to open him up and take him apart.

“Not gonna last,” Shane moaned. “Ilya-”

“Come, then.” He gripped Shane's hips hard enough to bruise. “Do it.”

Shane would have been embarrassed with how easily he followed Ilya’s command if he hadn't been so completely overcome with white hot pleasure in that moment.

Ilya kept pounding into him as Shane's moans turned into whimpers and gasps of his name. He finally came with a groan and collapsed down on top of Shane, breathing hard and pressing open-mouthed kisses to whatever skin was nearby.

A lazy shower and a quickly changed bed quilt later, they were back in the bed together. Their limbs tangled and Ilya had a hand on Shane's chest, thumb idly rubbing circles at his sternum in a way that made his heart hum. It felt wrong when he finally had to pull away to reach for the lamp on the table and flick the switch, but Ilya pulled him right back in after.

They both fell asleep quickly.

Shane woke the next morning to light spilling into the room, bathing them both in a golden glow. Ilya was curled against him with his head on Shane's chest. He pressed a kiss to messy curls at the top of Ilya's head but he didn't wake yet.

A sudden urge gripped Shane. Careful not to jostle him, he reached for his phone on the nightstand and opened the camera app. He angled it up and framed the photo. He was visible from the chest up, smiling and sleepy with the golden glow from the rising sun. Ilya's head was poking into the bottom of the frame, just the slightest sliver of his ear and eyebrow beneath messy curls.

He'd been making an effort to post more online. His account had been mostly professional stuff up until recently. Now checking his profile showed him and Ilya, Ilya and Anya, and a photo of them at their wedding. People wanted to know more about his and Ilya's life and they would rather give them what they were willing to share instead of having a repeat of their outing. Plus, there was a thrill to not only saving the photos he used to have to delete but to show them publicly as well.

He opened up instagram and posted the photo, adding a couple of emojis into the caption and tagging Ilya. He was about to set his phone aside and maybe settle back in to sleep some more when his phone buzzed.

Hayden: Bro what the fuck?

Shane's brow furrowed and he was about to text back and ask what Hayden was talking about when two more texts came through. The first contained a link to a social media post. The second said, "You're trending."

He clicked the link and was treated to the photos of the two of them at the club the previous night. There was a photo of them dancing, one of them making out, even one of Ilya grabbing his ass. Even in the dim light, the lust between them was plain to see. The familiar feeling of panic started to rise but was quelled almost instantly. He couldn't help the quiet laugh that escaped him when he saw that #THATASS and #hollanov were both trending topics.

"What is funny?" came a sleepy voice. Shane turned the phone so Ilya could see. It took a moment for him to focus and understand what he was seeing, then he laughed too. "Now everyone gets to see how good we looked." His hand slid down Shane's chest, then down down down. "Let them see what they cannot have."

Shane kissed his head and texted Hayden back with a quick “oops 🤦” then flipped back to Instagram to see how the picture he'd just posted was doing. It already had about 15k likes and a hundred comments. Rose was the first comment listed, just a simple 💋 emoji. Shane liked the comment then showed it to Ilya.

“I look like I am sucking your dick in that picture,” he said.

Shane looked at the picture again. Sure, Ilya’s head was tilted down but it was resting on his pec. “How long do you think my dick is?”

Ilya laughed and kissed his chest. “Is good picture. They can see hickey I left, too.”

“What?” He looked down at his chest, then closer at the picture. It was faint, possibly passing as a shadow, but Ilya was right. The mark just below his collarbone was on full display. He decided not to care about it. What did they think he was doing on his goddamn honeymoon?

He locked his phone and set it aside, then flipped them over so he was straddling Ilya. Ilya slid his hands up Shane's thighs, his thumbs rubbing idly against his hips. Ilya's hair was a mess and there was a pink mark on his cheek from where it had been pressed against Shane's chest. “Fuck, you're beautiful in the morning,” Shane said. He leaned down to kiss him, not even caring for the moment that they hadn't brushed their teeth. They stayed like that for a while, lazily making out. Hands roamed with no destination, Shane found himself on his back for a while and then on top of Ilya again with little memory of either of them making the conscious choice to move. It was just them, being with each other and soaking up every moment of warmth through the touch of bare skin.

They didn't make it out of the house until early afternoon and then they picked up some food on their way to the beach. It was a hot day, with the sun beating down from a cloudless sky. They set up some towels with a cooler a ways up the beach, well above the tideline. They'd traveled a ways down the beach before stopping, glad to find an area that wasn't quite as crowded. They didn't mind getting seen but the pictures appearing online after their first night out here had reminded them of just how recognizable they were, especially when they were together. Shane didn't want to worry about paparazzi, he just wanted to spend time with his husband.

Once everything was settled and sunscreen was applied, Ilya slipped off his sandals and looked at Shane with a glint in his eyes that always told Shane he was up to something.

“What?” he asked.

“Is only one more thing to do,” Ilya said.

Shane looked down at the ground between them. It wasn't elaborate but it was good enough for a day at the beach. “What?” he asked again.

Ilya stared for a moment as the mischief in his eyes turned into the barest hint of the crooked smile Shane loved so much. “Race you.”

Ilya took off running towards the water and Shane didn't even need to think before he started sprinting after him.

Ilya's legs were longer and he had a head start but Shane was determined to catch him. He reached the water line a stride and a half behind him and grabbed him around the waist two steps later. Their feet got tangled together in the shifting sand and they both fell immediately into the water. When they both popped back up, Ilya was sputtering and shaking his head, making wet curls fall messily into his face.

"Asshole," he said.

"Cheater," Shane countered with a wide grin. He reached a hand out to him and pulled Ilya closer, staying on his knees in the warm water. "Are you okay?" He hadn't actually meant for them to go down that way.

Ilya rolled his eyes. "You messed up my hair."

Shane splashed him.

They stayed at the beach for the rest of the day, alternating between enjoying the water and the warm sun. Shane thought it was one of the best days of his life.

The sun had set when Shane went to find a bathroom and get a couple bottles of water from a shop down the beach. Ilya remained there, leaning back on his hands and enjoying the stillness. The breeze off the ocean was turning chilly while the dry sand beneath him still radiated the heat of the day. A ways down the beach, a group was having a bonfire but their music and laughter was mostly muffled by the waves and the distance. It was just him, the night, and the small portable lamp Shane had turned on when it got too dark to see.

The gentle padding sound of a foot sinking into sand was the only warning Ilya got before his lap was full of the familiar weight of a very familiar man.

"Thought you got lost," he said, opening his eyes and smiling up at Shane.

Shane didn't say anything, just leaned in to kiss him, then handed him the water. Ilya opened it and took a drink, appreciating the refreshing coolness after the heat and the salt. Shane did the same and Ilya couldn't resist eying the way his Adam's apple bobbed in the dim light from the lamp.

Shane shifted and got out of his lap soon after, laying back and stretching out on the ground. Ilya went with him, bumping his foot against Shane's and tangling their fingers. There was such a simple joy in this, the privacy of the darkness with the sounds from down the beach tethering them, reminding them they weren't completely alone. And they didn't need to be. Shane turned his head to look at Ilya, finding the man looking up at the stars peaking down in the sky.

There was a freedom to even this, he found. Laying beside the man he loved, alone and unobserved. Private, not secret. It was his choice now to bring Ilya's hand up to his mouth and kiss the ring on his finger where no one could see. It was his choice to find time alone to

remind his husband how much he adored him. Going public with their relationship had expanded everything, even the moments of quiet like this.

As Shane was laying in bed that night, waiting for Ilya to brush his teeth, he checked his phone and saw that he'd been tagged in a photo on Instagram. He opened it to find a picture of him at the beach. He was sitting on the towel in nothing but his swim trunks, which were riding up over his thighs. He was wearing sunglasses over a broad grin. The caption below made his heart stutter.

*Vsegda, moy lyubimyy.*
*Forever, my love.*

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Shane was sitting in the dressing room before practice. As captain, Ilya had a meeting with the coaches before practice so he'd also arrived early. He hadn't even started getting his pads out yet when Hayes walked in.

“Oh, hey Hollander,” Hayes said, nodding to him as he walked to his own stall. “Where's Ilya?”

Shane looked up and couldn't help the grin that split his face at that question. It was so simple. Hi Shane. Where's the other one? If one is here, the other can't be far. Like they were a set. Do not separate.

“Meeting with Wiebe,” he said, knowing he was still grinning like an idiot.

Hayes nodded and started talking to him about the upcoming game against the Admirals. Shane tried to pay attention but all he could wonder was how he was expected to skate at practice today. With how light he felt, he was sure he was going to fly.

End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! Comments and kudos are always appreciated ☺

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