

Dirty Secrets, Stolen Moments

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Dirty Secrets, Stolen Moments

by [Stargirl \(JanetBaby99\)](#)

Summary

“You’ve got to show Hollander,” someone laughs incredulously.
Before he can really process what is happening, J.J. is shoving a phone in his face, the screen so close the picture that he is trying to show him is nothing but a blurb of a man and woman.
“Look at this shit, can you believe it?” J.J. asks excitedly.
“I don’t know what I’m looking at,” Shane cringes back, eyes hurting.
“Rozanov is engaged.”

And just like that, the world stops.

Shane blinks, and then blinks again. Surely he misheard.

Shane hears a rumor in the locker room that Ilya Rozanov is engaged. He breaks his own heart by believing it without asking Ilya if it's true.

Notes

I kept thinking about how Ilya thought Shane was engaged at the All Stars game thought what if Shane heard a rumor that Ilya was engaged instead. I hope you like it!! Thank you [fluxblood](#) for beta reading this!

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

Rumors in the hockey world tend to spread like wildfire.

It isn't necessarily from tabloids or journalists who are searching for juicy gossip. It isn't often from fans who overhear or see things they shouldn't. Instead, it comes from the locker rooms.

Before and after games, Shane has become accustomed to hearing some new rumor from his teammates. Guys switching teams, sleeping around, fighting outside of the ice, cheating on wives, the list goes on and on ranging from the tamest truths to the most outrageous lies.

Shane usually is able to block it out. He doesn't really care about all of that. He cares about the game, he cares about winning, he cares about losing, and he cares about Ilya Rozanov.

He supposes that is why he listens today.

They're in Los Angeles today, gearing up to start practice before the game. The locker room is loud, annoyingly so, making it hard to concentrate and lock in on the game at hand. They need to win tonight, and Shane is determined to do so. It's hard though, when a loud "Ooh NO WAY," echoes through the locker room.

Lockers clash shut, more gasps of astoundment echoing through the room. He winces internally sitting on the bench, wondering what it could possibly be this time.

"You've got to show Hollander," someone laughs incredulously.

Before he can really process what is happening, J.J. is shoving a phone in his face, the screen so close the picture that he is trying to show him is nothing but a blurb of a man and woman.

"Look at this shit, can you believe it?" J.J. asks excitedly.

"I don't know what I'm looking at," Shane cringes back, eyes hurting.

"Rozanov is engaged."

And just like that, the world stops.

Shane blinks, and then blinks again. Surely he misheard. Maybe he means Rolland or Rodridguez. Not Rozanov though. Maybe there's a new player in the league named Rozanov? Is that a common last name?

His heart begins to pick up in his chest.

"No way," Hayden pipes up next to him, slamming his locker shut with a bang.

Shane flinches at the sound, wide eyes tracking his best friend's movement as he takes the offending phone in his hand and squints at the picture. "How do you know he's engaged?"

“Someone from the Admirals saw him at this fancy restaurant with a girl, and when they were leaving, she was all over him and he saw a ring. Look, you can see the ring in the pic, zoom in!”

Shane’s jaw drops, anxiety beginning to creep up his spine. His brain runs and runs, but somehow his thoughts are completely empty. He doesn’t know what to think other than it must be a lie. Bullshit. They aren’t... they aren’t exclusive. He knows that Ilya goes out with other people all the time. Women especially. Maybe they were on a date, and it just looks like it is something more than it is.

“Holy shit,” Hayden breathes.

“Right? Show Hollander again,” J.J. insists eagerly.

Hayden turns the phone to face him once again, and Shane’s heart plummets.

Sure enough, Ilya Rozanov is sitting in the booth of what looks to be a fancy restaurant, the table in front of him adorned with a tablecloth and candlelight. He’s not particularly dressed up, but he looks nice with his black shirt tucked into his jeans, beautiful curls slicked back just enough to show he put effort into his presentation. Across from him is the most beautiful woman Shane has ever seen, gorgeous curls spilling around her shoulders with a grand smile on her face as Ilya holds out what looks to be a fucking ring. It’s small and delicate and perfect for her slender fingers.

“Can you imagine Roz getting engaged? I can’t even picture it.”

“No, he’s such a fucking asshole,” Hayden agrees. “How can she put up with that?”

“Maybe he’s different in a relationship.”

“Doubt it.”

Shane thinks the world is falling apart. The floor is literally crumbling beneath his feet, and he’s going to slip through the cracks and fall apart too. The room spins, and for a moment, he is sure that he is going to throw up.

Now, he knows what to think, but every thought makes him sick to his stomach.

He talked to Ilya a few days ago. They play Boston in two weeks, and their usual banter and flirtation heavily insinuated that Ilya would be fucking him in his hotel room after the game, win or lose. Does that mean he planned to cheat on his new fiancée? With Shane?

Shane is many things, but he is not a... a *homewrecker*.

Except... engagements do not just come out of nowhere. Engagements come after months, years sometimes, of being with someone. Being *committed* to someone. But they’ve been together fairly recently in the past few months, so does that mean Ilya has already cheated on his fiancée then? With Shane?

There’s no way. There is absolutely no way.

Shane reaches out and snatches the phone, ears ringing. He can vaguely hear his team continuing to rag on Ilya and his fiancée, wondering how they could possibly be together and what she must be like to be able to put up with him. All he can do is stare at the picture. It's grainy, obviously taken from far away, and blurry at the edges. The Admirals player who snapped it must have been in a hurry, not wanting to get caught. It's undeniable what he's looking at.

He wants to panic. His chest rises and falls rapidly, sweat dotting his forehead before they've even made it to warm-ups, and he wants to throw up, but he can't, not in front of his team, not over Ilya Rozanov.

He has so many questions. How long has this been going on? Does she know about Shane, or did he just become even more of a dirty secret? How could Ilya do this to him? Sure, they do not talk about their personal lives all that much or their relationships, but Shane would never... he would never want to...

"Shane, buddy," Hayden shakes him out of his thoughts with a gentle hand on his arm. "Phone?"

"Sorry," he bites out, pulling it away from his face. He looks around, lost, before handing it over to J.J.

"You good man?" He asks, eyebrow raised at Shane's reactions.

"Yeah," he lies, fighting the devastation that threatens to creep into his voice. "Just... can't believe it. I guess."

"I know, right, it's crazy. Never thought Rozanov would marry."

Shane didn't either.

They lose, which only serves to make him feel worse. And it's probably his fault. He played like shit because he couldn't keep his thoughts straight and for the first time, he let his relationship with Ilya affect how he played.

He leaves the locker rooms as fast as he possibly can, fulfilling his captain duties and talking to the press as little as possible before slipping out and running to his hotel with his tail between his legs.

He keeps careful composure as he rides up the elevator. Even though he can feel his blood thrumming in his ears and his heart beginning to race and his throat tightening with emotion, he does not let himself fall apart. Not until the door to his hotel room is shut behind him.

As he slides the locks into place though, his vision is blurry with tears. He tries to hold them in, denies himself over and over again in his head. They aren't in a relationship and that

means this is a weird thing to cry over and he doesn't want to cry, he doesn't want to lose control of himself and his emotions but...

In the privacy of the night with no one around to see, he lets them fall for once, hot wet drops rolling down his cheeks. All of the emotions he had choked back since the locker room well up inside of him, resulting in a pathetic whimper escaping his lips, unable to do more than bear his teeth in his grief.

How could Ilya do this? How could he do it to Shane? To his fiancée?

It makes no sense. Why did he not even mention being in a relationship? Why did he take away that choice for Shane? Instead he dragged him into this with no consideration for anyone else. How many times did they hook up when Ilya was in a relationship? How many times did Ilya cheat with Shane?

Shane doesn't even make it to the bed. He presses his back against the door, hiccuping sobs tearing through him as he slides down the door to sit on the floor. He wants to ask all of these questions. He wants to call Lily and ask why and how and beg for something that he isn't really sure of. Answers, maybe. Or beg for it not to be true, but how can that picture be anything but?

He can imagine it. Ilya doesn't seem like the kind to make a grand show and drop to one knee, or give a speech. The way it looked in the picture is as if he just pulled the ring from his pocket and held it out. He probably whispered something to her that only she could hear, something sweet and caring—the way he can be when Shane least expects it. It must have been romantic, and she must have said yes. The way she smiled in that picture is burned into his brain.

And really, what did he expect? That they would do this forever?

Secrets and hotel rooms and stolen moments every other month? It would be miserable to keep this up forever, even if Shane had kind of thought that is how it would go. He loves their time together, the sex and the teasing and how fun it is to be around him. He enjoys time with Ilya. He would dare say he has feelings for him even, not that he would admit it outloud. Their secret meetings with each other have always felt... special. It's a kind of feeling he's only ever found in Ilya. Even when he's been with other men, none of them have ever made his heart feel the way Ilya does.

But that does not mean Ilya feels the same. In fact, obviously he doesn't. But he thought...

He thought he meant *something*. Maybe. Even if only in a friendly way. And they are friends, kind of, in a way. They laugh and joke and have a good time together. If Shane were in a relationship, he would tell Ilya. He wouldn't keep up their secret meetings, he wouldn't cheat.

His head hurts. It pounds, and each retched-out sob does nothing but make it hurt more.

Shane shoves the heels of his palms into his eyes until colors float behind his eyelids. The corners of his eyes feel raw already, and he goes between devastation and feeling like a total and complete idiot for getting himself into this situation.

It takes far too long to calm himself down. He must be repressed, he thinks, because he cries, and then cries more, until an empty feeling replaces the despair, leaving him hollow.

After that, he just sits. He isn't really sure what to do. He showered after the game, he already ate. Really he should be with his team right now or getting rest but both sound exhausting right now.

But just when he wills his body to move, his phone chimes.

Shane stares vacantly across the dark room at the window.

It could be anyone. His mom, his dad, Hayden. It could be his team or a random number or it could be an advertisement even.

But in his heart, he knows.

He stays frozen, petrified, unwilling to look and see who it is. It isn't until a second chime makes him jump that he shifts, pulling his phone out of his pocket.

Shane takes a deep, solidifying breath, and opens it.

Lily: Saw you lose tonight

Lily: Two losses in a row is no good

They haven't lost twice in a row. Tonight was their first loss in quite a few games, making it even more devastating. He's just counting on Shane losing again when they play Boston, and usually, Ilya's shit talk would get him fired up. He might even take a few jabs back, chirping at each other until it turns heated like their own strange way of dirty talk.

Instead, the texts put a sinking feeling in his stomach once again. In the midst of his meltdown, he forgot that they play Boston soon. In fourteen days— thirteen really, now that it is midnight— they will be on the same ice as each other. Shane will be expected to go to Ilya's room after because they've already made plans to do so. Unless he turns him down.

And how is he going to get through that?

Instead of sending an answering text back, Shane shuts off his phone, and stares out the window at the city outside.

He leaves Ilya Rozanov on read.

For the next two weeks, Shane does not answer any of Ilya's messages, not that he sends many to begin with. Each one stays on read, because really, Shane doesn't know what there is to say to him.

He has a lot of things he wants to say, but each one feels wrong in his mouth, like he can't quite get his tongue to fit around the words well enough to say it, so he just doesn't.

Days pass, and Shane throws himself into training a bit more than usual. If he isn't on the ice, he's in the gym, and if he isn't in the gym or working, then he's asleep because as long as he stays busy, there's no time to think and no time to stalk Ilya online looking for the slightest mention of his engagement.

Even on the plane ride to Boston, he does not let himself think about Ilya. There's an uncertainty that creeps up under his spine every time he thinks about what is to come after the game, but the game is certain at least. He is going to win. Shane doesn't even take the time to correct himself and say that the Metros will win or that Boston will lose, because that is not what he is concerned with. *He* is going to win. He is going to beat Rozanov.

Lily: was your flight good?

Lily: 2304, Courtyard Hotel

Lily: Got a room just for you 🍷👉

Shane ignores it all.

He doesn't let himself think about Ilya or his hotel or what will happen after the game. He does not let himself lose focus on this game like he did in the last one, he is not going to become distracted.

He doesn't let himself scan the crowd for Ilya's fiancée. He does not let himself look at Ilya before practice. He goes straight to the locker room, though that doesn't help much.

"I wonder if Roz's girl is here."

"Bet she is."

"Either she's way nicer than Rozanov or she's just as much of an asshole as he is."

Shane swallows thickly, and ignores it. He does not let himself listen in to their gossip, not again.

As soon as his uniform is on and he's given his usual pep talk, he goes out to the ice to start stretching. He keeps his head down and does not once let himself look at the stands.

Falling into the routines of the game is easy. It's necessary. For a moment, he almost feels normal, like the rug hasn't been ripped out from under him, like this is just a normal game. He does his stretches, he does the usual practice routines. The crowd doesn't roar for him- it's an away game after all- but his blood is roaring in his ears and that is enough.

That is, until it is time to face off.

Of course he is chosen for the face off and of course so is Ilya because like the reporters love to say, any chance to get the two of them in front of each other is a chance they're going to take.

It makes the crowd erupt as suddenly the source of all his grief is suddenly standing in front of him, and he's impossible to ignore.

Shane keeps his eyes trained on where the puck will drop, heart hammering in his chest. He can feel blue eyes boring holes into him, but he refuses to look up at him.

"Hollander," Ilya greets carefully, though there is something in his tone that makes Shane want to look up at him.

When he doesn't, Ilya tries again. "You are ignoring me."

It's a statement but it comes out more like a question than he's sure Ilya wants it to.

The ref drops the puck, and somehow despite his concentration, Rozanov gets it first. It only serves to feel as another small defeat.

Anger surges up inside of him, a snarl on his face, and in that moment, he realizes he forgot to be angry. He has felt hurt, for two weeks, pain, grief, confusion, but he forgot his anger. Until this very moment.

Shane spent more time in the penalty box than he spent on the ice, yet he manages to score two goals and gets a good punch in on Rozanov. It hit his helmet, but it still felt good at the moment. He needed it. Despite the high contact of the sport and the normalcy of fighting, he's never been so aggressive on the ice as he has been tonight. His team felt the shift, Hayden even asked if he was good a few times, but each time he assured him he was. Even if he didn't feel good himself, it felt good to let it out.

4-3, Metros win. Victory has never felt so amazing in his life.

When it comes time to high five the opposing team, Shane does it with too wide of a smile on his face, one that twists and doesn't reach his eyes, manic even. He doesn't back down, even when his gloved hand makes contact with Rozanov's.

Ilya pauses, waiting for some form of acknowledgement. He tried a few times during the game, on the benches or on the ice, but Shane avoided him each and every time.

He does it again, too, not saying a single word to Ilya. Instead, he skates away and finally allows himself a glance at the crowd.

No beautiful curls, no bright smile. It seems Ilya's fiancée didn't come tonight, or she left before the game was over; Shane isn't sure which. Either way, a mixture of relief and disappointment fills him. In some way, it would have been nice to make eye contact with the woman, but he cannot help but feel glad not to see her. He isn't sure he could keep the devastation at bay.

Once he's back in the locker room, ready to hit the showers, the gossip is forgotten in favor of congratulations, another thing to be grateful for. It seems everyone has forgotten about Rozanov's fiancée except for him.

He tries to chat back when others talk to him, and Shane forces a smile for the press after he is showered and ready to go to his hotel. He doesn't see Rozanov either, not during interviews and not as he leaves the arena.

He decides to walk to his hotel rather than stay with his team, and he hopes if they knew what he was going through right now, they would understand why he is not out celebrating with them.

This is the uncertain part, the part that has made his hair stand on end to think about.

Is Ilya still going to invite him to his hotel still?

It would be insane if he did, right? That would be shameless. Horrible, something that he wouldn't think Ilya would ever do. Ilya may be an asshole, but he is not mean. He isn't careless.

Would he go if he did?

No. Shane shoots the thought down before it even has time to brew in his head. He would not go to Ilya's hotel room tonight if he invited him because that is not the kind of person he is.

His heart pangs in his chest. If he had known the last time with Ilya had been the last though, he would have kissed him more. He would have said goodbye in their own strange language, with his hands and tongue and body instead of his words. Hell, maybe he would have told him how he feels, though that feels more like an idealistic thought than one than something that could take place in reality.

But he would surely have kissed him more. He would have kissed him goodbye. He would have savored the last moment rather than leave without a second thought, expecting to see

him again in the not-so-distant future.

The night air is cold, and it's the only thing that keeps him upright. He shivers, and without thinking, he takes his phone out while he walks, checking his messages.

Lily: Are you coming?

Lily: Is something wrong?

And finally, a missed call from Lily.

That makes his footsteps falter.

Lily does not call. He doesn't think he's ever actually spoken on the phone to Lily before.

Shane swallows, staring down at the missed message. There's a voicemail that goes with it. Ears ringing once more, he clicks on it and brings the phone up to his ear.

Ilya's voice is a mixture of anger and confusion, though he sounds more confused than anything else. "Hollander, are you coming tonight? I got hotel room just for us. Is something wrong? You have not answered my texts, it is not like yo-" he cuts himself off, and then takes a deep breath. "Let me know if you are coming tonight at least. I would like to go home if not," he pauses awkwardly, then adds, "bye."

The message ends with a click, and Shane is left standing on the street, shivering.

Fuck.

Shane is sure Ilya would like to go home. His girlfriend is probably there, his fiancée. She's probably there waiting for him, ready to console him about the loss, and has no idea that Ilya is out at some hotel waiting for someone else.

For the first time in two weeks, Shane sends a message to Rozanov.

Jane: I'm not coming.

He types it out, stares at it, analyzes each letter, and contemplates sending it. He should. He really should, but for some reason, this is what makes it feel like it is all ending. This three-word text, and a period. It leaves no room for argument or explanation. It feels final.

Tears sting in his eyes, but he refuses to let them fall as he hits send.

One Month Later

They're playing Boston again, this time in Montreal.

Ilya has not reached out to him since their last game, and for a while, things almost felt normal, like maybe he could move on with his life. The distance between them helped more than harmed for once, but now that the distance is closed, he feels like he's back at square one.

They lose, and this time Shane swears it wasn't because of his emotions. It was a close game and it could have gone to either of them. They still have a chance at the cup, so it's fine... it's fine.

Shane knows he's fucked though when Ilya stares him down from across the ice. His team is celebrating the win, and Ilya acknowledges it to a degree, but his eyes keep locking on Shane.

Absolutely fucked.

Maybe it was naive to think that he could escape this without talking to him.

Just like the loss, he tells himself it'll be okay. Enough time has passed, it's been a month for god's sake, and they aren't... they weren't anything. Fuck buddies, maybe friends on a good day. A month should be enough time for him to get over his feelings and get over the affair and get over Ilya. He'll even congratulate him.

That is plan B though. Plan A is to tuck tail and run.

It feels childish, but he lingers in the locker room. He listens to the shit talk and gossip, he takes an extra long shower. He promises his team this isn't a huge loss and perhaps his speech as captain goes a bit longer than it should all in the hopes that if he waits long enough, Rozanov will give up waiting for him.

He almost escapes.

Freshly showered and changed, he tries to run just like he did after the last game, ducking out onto the streets, but he hears Ilya before he sees him.

"Hollander, wait!"

The accent makes his stomach flip, his deep and sultry voice still managing to excite him.

"Fuck off, Rozanov," Shane shouts over his shoulder, glancing around nervously. Thankfully, it seems like the crowd from the game has disappeared, leaving the streets mostly empty.

It's dark and cold, and he wants to go home, and he doesn't want to have this conversation.

"Fucking wait," Ilya growls.

Shane dares a glance backward, heart sinking as he sees Ilya running up to him. He looks incredible as always. It's unfair. All he's wearing is a plain grey t-shirt and joggers and yet he looks like a fucking model.

And Shane can't touch him.

"What is wrong with you?" Ilya asks as he gets close enough, glancing around just the same as Shane did. No one's watching them, though. It's late, and the street is dark. Still, paranoia sets in like an itch just beneath his skin.

"What's wrong with me?" Shane asks incredulously, feeling that familiar anger rise up inside of him to cover up the hurt that stings in his lungs, breathing in the same air as Ilya.

"Yes! You are ignoring me," Ilya raises his eyebrows up, eyes wide in a way that makes him look incredibly punchable in Shane's opinion.

Does he really not understand? He doesn't know why he would be upset about this?

Fuck, they cannot talk about this here. Even if no one is around to overhear them, it's still too public, too risky.

He knows where they can go, but everything in him screams that it's a bad idea.

Yet, he still offers it.

"Not here. The apartment. In an hour."

Ilya looks flabbergasted, and he opens his mouth to protest before glancing across the street and squaring his jaw. "Fine."

He stares Shane down a moment longer, and Shane hates how it makes him want to cower. Eventually, he decides to save whatever he wants to say with a shake of his head. He then turns and stalks back in the direction of the stadium.

Shane breathes out a sigh of relief, though his knees feel weak and his heart hammers wildly in his chest.

Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck *fuck*.

Shane reaches up, tugging at his hair anxiously.

Each step towards the apartment makes dread build in his stomach. It's as if he's walking towards certain death. He knows what's going to come, and it's going to hurt, and nothing can stop it.

What makes things impossibly worse is that Ilya does not wait like he asks him too. He walks a different path, and yet by the time Hollander drags his feet up to his apartment, Ilya is already there, waiting at the back stairwell with insufferable patience.

“What took you so long?” he asks as Shane approaches.

“I told you a hour,” Shane resists the urge to snap. “It hasn’t even been thirty minutes.”

“I took an Uber,” Ilya shrugs. “I was here in five.”

He thinks he might actually hate him.

Shane huffs, frustrated and unnerved. He walks up to the door and rips it open, not looking back to see if Ilya is following him. He knows he is.

The air is oddly quiet between them as they walk up the stairs to the apartment. They don’t race, they do not chat. There’s nothing but tension that snaps and coils with every step until Shane himself feels wound tight as he opens the door to the apartment.

He steps inside, Ilya follows.

He hasn’t been to this apartment since the last time he met Ilya here. And the time before that. In its own way, the space is beginning to feel sacred, a singular place in the world where it can be just them.

Well, until now. Because it's not just them anymore. It is Shane and Ilya and Ilya’s fiancée, who probably does not even know he is here right now, standing in the living room of his fuck buddy’s apartment. She’s an invisible presence between them that Shane cannot shake, and it makes his gut twist with shame and guilt and something far more dangerous.

Jealousy.

Ilya looks around quietly for a moment as Shane flicks on the lights, taking his shoes off by the door even though he’s never done that in this particular apartment before. Anything to busy himself, and Ilya lets him. He lets him nervously fidget and look around wildly like a cornered animal before finally his gaze settles on Ilya who stands in front of him with a soft smile, like he’s enamored by Shane’s behavior but that can’t be true, or at least it shouldn’t be true. He’s enamored with someone else.

Shane paces once more, stressed.

Ilya chooses that exact moment to move. He walks up to Shane, grabs hold of his face, and kisses him.

Shane freezes.

It feels like coming home in the worst way. The smell of Ilya’s cologne, the firm press of his hands against his jaw, the way his breath ghosts his upper lip when he sighs softly, it’s so familiar and inviting and Shane feels his knees wobble a bit at the touch.

He curses himself for how he melts against him, and especially for how badly he missed him. Despite the distance, despite the time and the knowledge that Ilya will never choose him because there is someone else better than him, Shane still cannot shake the way his stomach tightens at the thought of Ilya. He cannot stop the way his heart throbs and the twist of emotion deep inside the cavity in his chest that he is too afraid to put a name to so he just lives with it instead and lets it fester into something deeper.

Ilya's lips are soft and warm and his tongue is pushing past his lips and for a single moment Shane is weak. He lets him.

And then the realization of what they are doing sets in and bile rises in his throat.

"What the fuck, Rozanov," Shane pushes him away roughly. It takes the other player off guard, and the shove sends him stumbling back, eyes wide with shock.

"What?" Ilya asks, completely baffled.

Shane's brain slams the panic button over and over in his head, shivers racing up his spine with the growing emotion that surges up inside of him. He runs his fingers through his hair, stressed. He needs to take a breath, he needs to remember how to breathe. This is so incredibly wrong, all of it, everything-

"Hollander, calm down," Ilya tries with outreached hands, like he's calming a wild animal that's been cornered.

"Don't fucking-" anger roars inside of him, cutting his words off with a square of his jaw. "You need to leave."

"I don't fucking understand what is wrong," Ilya snaps back, frustration rising to meet Shane's.

"You're engaged!" Shane shouts. "You're fucking engaged."

Ilya has the nerve to look baffled.

Shane swallows past the lump in his throat, willing himself to calm down enough to make it through this without completely losing his composure.

"Congratulations."

It's hissed out and bitter, but he says it all the same.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Ilya asks, completely bewildered.

"I saw the picture!" Shane insists. He didn't think Ilya would deny it. In all of the times he imagined this conversation, he never pictured it quite like this.

"What picture?"

"Of the engagement."

“WHAT ENGAGEMENT?”

“Some player on the Admirals saw you, Rozanov. They got a picture of you at a fancy restaurant,” *one that we could never go to together*. “Giving a ring to a girl,” *something I’ll never have*.

I am so fucking jealous it hurts. Shane realizes.

Everything about Ilya seems to come to a stop. He stares openly at Shane, analyzing him, his eyes darting back and forth the way they always do when he is trying to understand something.

“She’s pretty,” Shane adds quietly, averting his eyes. It’s easier to stare at Ilya’s chest rather than into his eyes.

“She is pretty,” Ilya agrees finally after a beat of silence.

There it is, Shane’s heart sinks. The confirmation he had been waiting for. Ilya is done denying it, and next comes the full truth.

“How long-” Shane struggles to ask, though he isn’t sure he wants to know.

How long have you known her?

How long was it going on for?

How long were you going to wait to tell me?

“I have known her since we were young,” Ilya answers. “Kids even.”

Of course. That makes sense, she is from Russia too. She’s perfect, she’s someone that Ilya can be with and still go home to Russia with. If they’ve known each other since they were kids, then she’s probably already met his father and his brother. She has access to a completely different side of Ilya that Shane could never hope to have.

Tears well up in his eyes, stinging across his lash line, but he doesn’t let them fall, he doesn’t dare cry in front of Rozanov.

“Svetlana,” Ilya supplies helpfully.

Svetlana. A pretty name for a pretty woman, and god Shane wants to curl up and wallow in his self-pity.

“I know what you are talking about now... I think,” Ilya pauses, unsure.

Incredulously, Shane dares to glance at his face. He isn’t sure about his own damn engagement? Or he isn’t sure about which girl he was with? Both are insane to think about.

“She dropped her ring the last time we went to dinner. I was teasing her with it,” Ilya smirks, as if fondly remembering the memory.

“Right,” Shane scoffs with disbelief. He cannot believe Ilya would stoop so low as to lie about something like this, just so they could... what? Hook up more? He can’t possibly be that desperate.

“I am serious,” Ilya raises his eyebrows. “You don’t believe me?”

“No, I don’t.”

“I don’t have a ring,” Ilya holds his hands up.

Shane’s eyes trace over his left hand’s ring finger. True to his word, it is bare.

“That doesn’t mean anything,” Shane shakes his head, not willing to believe him so easily. If Ilya is telling the truth, then that means he ignored him for a month over nothing but a rumor. He missed out on a night together, and he’s missing out on another right now and fucking everything up in the process.

“How else can I prove it? Huh?” Ilya throws his hands up, at a loss for what else to do.

Shane is just as lost as he is. “I don’t know,” he answers honestly.

“What liar told you about this?” Ilya narrows his eyes, fishing his phone from his pocket.

“J.J. showed me,” Shane answers. “... I don’t have the picture, he does.”

The more he talks about it, the more stupid it sounds.

“When?”

“In the locker room.”

He can *feel* Ilya’s eye roll.

Shane’s stomach sinks for a whole new reason, his mind racing. “... You aren’t engaged?”

It was meant to be a statement, but it comes out as a question.

“No. I am not engaged, Hollander. You think I am worse than asshole,” Ilya scoffs.

Shane winces.

“I would not cheat. Even for you.”

Shane winces again. He thinks there might be some admission there, in the way he phrased it, but he isn’t sure and he doesn’t have the brainpower to look for it.

“Fuck,” Shane chokes. God, he is an idiot. A complete and total idiot who spent a month believing locker room talk instead of just asking Ilya. A month! A month of breaking his own heart and demonizing the person he lov-

“Well that is what I was hoping for when I came here,” Ilya shrugs.

Shane groans. "Shut up."

"Were you jealous?"

Shane freezes, feeling incredibly caught. "No," he tries to deny. "I thought we were having--"

"That I was cheating on someone? With you?" Ilya takes a step forward with that knowing tone that makes Shane want to hide.

Shane takes a step backward.

His hesitation doesn't make Ilya stop. He takes another step forward. "Not because you were jealous?"

Shane takes another step back, and then another, only for his back to run into the wall behind him.

With nowhere left to run, he watches Ilya prowl closer and closer, his heart racing faster with every step.

"You're not engaged," Shane bites out in a whisper as Ilya corners him up against the wall. There's nowhere left to go, the only thing he can do is stare at Ilya's neck and wait while his mind races, anxiety growing with every breath.

"No," Ilya answers honestly.

"You wouldn't lie," Shane confirms more for himself than anyone else.

"Do you want to ask her yourself? I will call her. You can ask."

Shane shakes his head, mortification simmering inside of him.

"We have been friends for long time," their chests almost press together in proximity. "We fuck, every now and then."

Shane swallows. He hates the brutal truth. It always makes his stomach feel strange when Ilya mentions women. Or really anyone. Ilya being with anyone else makes his skin feel wrong.

"But there is no... feelings," Ilya finishes. "Not like that."

Shane nods.

"You believe me? Or locker room talk?" Ilya presses into him fully now, a knee sliding between Shane's as their bodies become flush against one another.

"You," Shane answers honestly.

"Mm, and what should you probably say?" Ilya asks, knee sliding up further and further until it makes contact with Shane's crotch.

Shane furrows his brows at him, confused. “You want me to say sorry?”

Ilya smirks, and Shane scoffs.

“Fuck you,” He shakes his head. “I was scared.”

It is not that he minds apologizing, and he probably would have readily offered it if Ilya didn’t have that stupid smirk on his face. He’s baiting him right now, trying to get him riled up, and what is worse is that it’s working.

“You assumed something very wrong of me,” Ilya frowns, oddly playful all things considered.

“It-” Shane struggles to put his thoughts into words. It wasn’t an outlandish rumor, was it? The picture...

But it is outlandish, because Shane knows Ilya. He isn’t the kind of person to do something like that. Ilya Rozanov is a lot of things, but a cheater is not one of them.

Guilt simmers in his stomach, and Shane sneaks a glance at his face. He should apologize, probably, but like a coward, the words stick to his tongue now.

Ilya seems to understand that. Or maybe, he understood that the apology would get too close to the truth. Shane *was* jealous. The thought of Ilya belonging to someone else made him feel crazy and out of control. It made him lose his mind because his feelings are so much greater than hotel rooms and stolen moments, and it terrifies him.

“You could show me that you are sorry,” Ilya offers him an out, gracious in his own crude way. “I missed you.”

Shane pauses. “You did?”

“Well,” Ilya shrugs. “Your mouth.”

Liar.

Shane’s heart skips a beat. Ilya is lying, he did miss him, the same way Shane missed him.

He grins, feeling a little lighter. “You missed me.”

“No, I said I missed your mouth,” Ilya denies playfully. “Get on your knees and make up for calling me a dirty cheater.”

Shane meets his eyes and slowly sinks down to his knees. Obedience has always felt good to him, but he knows it makes Ilya just as crazy when he follows his commands.

Without hesitation, he pushes the hem of his shirt up, out of his way, pressing his face against the bulge in his pants. He tugs them down, and underwear too, with a little more enthusiasm than he probably should have.

Ilya is half hard and becoming more rigid by the second. He lets out a little groan of appreciation when Shane takes him in his hand, coaxing him to being fully erect.

Shane loves being here like this. He loves the feel of Ilya's hand in his hair and the weight of his cock on his tongue and the smell of his skin. He settles in like he never left, with a kiss to the tip and a playful lick before he takes him into his mouth, bobbing his head and hollowing his cheeks in the way that pulls a groan from Ilya every time.

"Fuck, Hollander," Ilya threads his fingers through his hair, not pushing or pulling but appreciating. It's gentle and sweet and only encourages Shane even further.

In the strangest way, being here and doing this settles his nerves. The anxiety that was creeping up his spine is flattened out and pushed back, not fully gone but forgotten at least. He loses himself in the task at hand, petting Ilya's thighs while he does so until he's inevitably pulled off with a swear and a moan.

"Enough," Ilya pants. The command comes out more like a plea.

Shane lets his cock slip from his lips with a wet pop, mouth slick and surely red from use. He gazes up at Ilya, drinking in the sight and committing it to memory. He almost lost it after all. He almost never got to see him blush again, or feel the tender way he cups Shane's head, and for a striking moment, he thinks he should tell him. He should demand that he never see anyone else again. Only Shane. He doesn't want there to ever be a chance of losing him again, and he should tell him how jealous it made him to imagine him with someone else, *anyone* else. Man, woman, it doesn't matter. Ilya Rozanov is *his*.

But he can't say that. So he stares up at him instead and tries to convey it with his eyes. He just hopes it looks sexy and not crazy.

"Get up," Ilya urges, a finger hooked under Shane's chin that he's helpless to follow, stumbling to his feet with a wobble in his knees. He clings to Ilya, lets him guide him through the apartment he has come to know well throughout the years, falling into the bedroom in a series of heated kisses.

Shane claws at Ilya's shirt, and Ilya does the same, working their clothes on a flurry of movements, desperation weighing on their limbs that makes them frantic. He wonders if Ilya feels it too, if he became just as needy in the month of silence.

Shane falls onto the mattress first, and Ilya comes tumbling down after, their bare chests pressed against each other.

"I-" Shane starts to say, but he isn't really sure where he is going with the sentence. He has so much to say but he knows better than to let any of it leave his mouth. It leaves him floundering and lost, but the one thing he knows is he missed Ilya. He missed hearing him talk and their banter and the asshole things he says.

"Turn over," Ilya encourages, reaching for the dresser with familiarity. It's strikingly domestic: Ilya leading him through Shane's own apartment and rifling through his drawers without hesitation.

Shane turns over onto his hands and knees, and... he kind of hates it. He wants to see Ilya's face this time, after all of the heart break and longing and pining, he wants to see his face up close but he doesn't know how to ask for that without...

Shane arches his back, a sway in his hips to entice Ilya closer. He swallows down the request and waits patiently as the bottle of lubricant and a strip of condoms is tossed up against his leg.

Shane glances over at it, and lets out a snort, reminiscing on their first time together. "Do we need all of them?"

"Probably," Ilya nods, the mattress dipping under his weight as he settles behind him. Big hands wrap around his hips, pulling him back where he wants him. "You don't think so?"

"I don't think you could do it," Shane teases, giggling softly when it earns him a pinch on his ass.

"Wrong, I don't think *you* could handle it," Ilya tugs at his pants, working them down and off. His underwear follows, and while it's awkward, eventually the fabric is tossed carelessly to the floor.

Shane frowns, glancing over at it. It's so... messy.

He sighs, and forces his thoughts back to the situation at hand. It isn't as if he is going to get up and fold his clothes. That would be insane. Even though he kind of wants to.

"I don't want to use one today," he answers instead.

Ilya leans over, an eyebrow quirked up on his face. "You hate the mess."

Shane shrugs. He supposes he can be particular about the mess. It isn't pleasant waddling out to an elevator with cum leaking out just to have to clean it up later. They've done it before on rare occasions, but today he craves it. He wants to be close to him, as close as possible. He just spent an entire month thinking it was over and feeling like he missed out on something grand and... *important*, even though their relationship is far from it. "I just... want to feel you," Shane answers, knowing the best way to rile Ilya Rozanov up is to describe just how much Shane wants him.

Ilya stares at him. He stares into his very soul, and for a moment, he feels *too* seen. Like Ilya knows exactly what he is thinking and why he wants this, and it makes a prickle of nervousness race up his spine that he has grown to know all too well.

"Okay," Ilya concedes, kissing his shoulder sweetly.

Shane relaxes at the kiss. It is easy to fall into familiar patterns like this. Ilya kisses his spine and shoulder blades, plastering himself to Shane's back as he fingers him open the same way he's done for years now. They've gone longer than a month without seeing each other, much longer, but the turmoil he's been in has made it seem like a decade since he last had him like

this. His fingers feel bigger, rougher, reaching deeper and curling up sweeter until sweat dots his temple, a breathless curse on his lips with each thrust.

One finger, two, three, his hips loosen up, rocking back to fuck himself on his fingers, bracing his elbows against the bed for better leverage.

“Rozanov.”

The name is a habit, rolling off his tongue as easily as a whimper escapes his chest. It has the desired effect. As much as he loves Ilya working him open, it’s better to have him inside.

He withdraws his fingers, and for a moment Shane clenches around nothing, open and waiting and past the point of desperation.

Then the blunt head of his cock presses against his hole, and Shane groans before he is even inside of him. He sinks into him in a fluid motion, a hint of pain racing through his nerves that melts into pleasure the more time Ilya gives him to adjust.

Ilya rubs his back soothingly. “Good job.”

Shane’s stomach twists at the praise. He would never admit it out loud, but he loves it. He wants to be the best at everything he does, he wants to hear just how well he’s doing. Even a simple ‘good job’ makes his knees feel weak, especially coming from Ilya.

“You take me so well,” he comments idly, pulling out almost to the tip before splitting him open once again. Every time they do this, Shane finds himself caught up on how full he feels with him. Ilya is big and Shane cannot get enough of it.

Shane whimpers, forehead pressed against his forearm, overwhelmed yet aching for more. He pushes his hips back eagerly, trying to fuck himself and meet his thrusts, but there is something that just...

It isn’t right. It’s good, but it’s not right. Ilya must feel it too, they don’t continue on like this for long before he decides to change it.

“Come here,” Ilya urges. “Turn over again.”

Shane glances over his shoulder again, watching Ilya push his hair back from his forehead.

He hesitates, not sure he will be able to handle it, but wanting it more than anything. Finally, he rolls over, and Ilya is on top of him in an instant, crowding him against the mattress.

Shane reaches out, running his hands over his chest. He squeezes his pec, rubs along his abs, and up to his neck, wrapping his fingers around it to feel how he swallows.

Ilya bends his knees to his chest, driving into him with renewed vigor. The angle makes it feel like he’s fucking into him deeper than he’s ever been before, sparks of pleasure racing through him with every thrust.

Tonight, it's a million times better being able to see his face. He can see how he squeezes his eyes shut when Shane feels particularly good around him, he can see how he grimaces as he pounds into him like it feels so good it's borderline too much. And he can hear him better. Ilya is just as loud as Shane is in bed with his grunts and moans and sighs.

The rhythm he sets is punishing, pounding into him so hard the headboard clacks against the wall and for once Shane thinks maybe buying the entire building for this exact reason wasn't such a bad idea.

Shane's eyes roll back, hand reaching down desperately to grab hold of his dick. He jerks himself off frantically, out of pace but he needs release. It's a struggle, because for as overwhelmingly good as it feels, he still desperately wants to see Ilya's face.

He forces his eyes to focus, tracing over the sweat on his brow to the mole on his cheek, the curve of his lips still kiss-bitten and pink, and finally to his eyes, unsurprised to see Ilya staring intensely at him. He holds his gaze, heart pounding and it finally settles in that he's not losing him. Not yet.

Their lips meet once again, over and over, Ilya's tongue slipping into his mouth and dominating the kiss. It quickly turns lazy though, neither one able to give enough attention to kissing when they are both approaching the brink. The passion doesn't leave, but becomes open mouth pants, the air between mingling with their shared breaths. Every now and then, they try for another kiss: some land, and others are awkwardly placed, drawing soft laughs out of them.

Heat spreads under his skin, tightening his muscles the closer he gets. Ilya is close too, his previously well timed thrusts losing their rhythms as his hips falter and jerk, jackrabbiting into him and chasing his own release.

Shane really isn't sure who comes first. His orgasm is like taking a punch on the ice, knocking the breath out of him completely. His vision goes blank, ropes of white spilling over his stomach, muscles still twitching.

He holds himself through the aftershocks, a spill of sighs and whimpers falling from parted lips when air finally returns to his lungs and he remembers how to function as a human being. He can feel Ilya's cock still pulsing inside of him, cum painting his insides.

They stay like that, mouths still achingly close until Ilya finally releases his hold on Shane's knees, letting his legs fall back to the bed.

He slips out carefully, and flops down onto the bed next to Shane.

Shane smiles at the closeness, loving how their arms brush against each other and their shins. If he wanted to, he could scoot just the slightest bit closer and their entire bodies would be touching. Even their hands graze, and Ilya playfully uses his pointer finger to drag Shane's hand into the semblance of a hand hold. It's as close as they've ever gotten to doing something so mundane.

For a moment, there is only silence.

The longer they lie there, the more reality sets in and the events that transpired.

Shane is once again reminded of why he dislikes not using a condom, though this time instead of a verbal reminder, it is physical. His entire body feels dirty, from the sweat drying to his skin to the cum dripping between his trembling thighs that still shake occasionally.

The sex is always good, it is the aftermath that follows that is unsure. Usually the dirty feeling only serves to make him feel worse. Used and spent and forgotten. Most of the time, Ilya goes to shower and Shane lies in bed alone and thinks and his thoughts have a horrible habit of running wild when left to his own devices in moments like this.

Shane swallows, anxiety sliding over him like a second skin. He carefully keeps his eyes on the ceiling, thinking about the smooth texture and the crown molding and if he'll need to renovate it before he sells it because really, he needs to sell the building. An apartment meant only for sex is excessive even for him but he isn't sure when he would ever deal with it because his schedule is so full and he's pretty sure he needs to be up early tomorrow and it's already late and there's a few emails he still needs to answer from brands and—

What is he doing? What is he thinking about?

Shane rubs at his face, begging himself to calm down if only for a second.

And when Ilya makes no move to leave, he dares a glance in his direction, still not at his face but it's at least an acknowledgement.

“Do you really think I would cheat?” Ilya asks conversationally. His tone doesn't hold any animosity. There's no real inflection of hurt either, just curiosity.

It still makes Shane's stomach sink with guilt all over again. “Well,” he struggles to find the right words. “It's not like we are anything serious.”

It has been a long time. A few years even, but Ilya reminding him that they are not anything still echoes in his head sometimes. It had felt cruel in the moment, but maybe that cruelty had been necessary. Otherwise, Shane might just do something stupid, like fall in love.

In that moment, he feels incredibly stupid.

Ilya hums. “True.”

“I really am sorry,” Shane confesses. It feels heavy, like he's saying sorry for more things than just the misunderstanding.

“Is okay,” Ilya whispers back, voice soft and full of understanding. “Next time just ask me, okay?”

Shane nods, throat tight. He can do that.

“I am going to shower,” Ilya changes the subject, and the night ends as it always does with Ilya Rozanov.

End Notes

Let me know what you thought!! My twitter is @stargirlvivian :D

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