Day to Day

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by mcshrug

Summary

Shane is hiding an injury. Ilya notices.

Notes

I don’t know what’s happening to me. I can’t stop writing about them.

Shane is hoping no one notices something is wrong.

There's no reason they should, really, given that Shane had spent a good fifteen minutes that morning practicing what it's like to walk like a normal person. That's not to mention the Voyageurs medical staff has wrapped his right ankle so tightly it's barely even stretching out his dress shoe.

He can feel his heartbeat in the tip of each toe as he pushes open the door to the press room.

Inside, he can't see anything but camera flashes.

Shane plasters on his media-ready smile and walks steadily into the glare, blinking until he can make out the rows of seated reporters, the news crews hunched over their tripods and light panels along the back wall.

It's just eight carefully-rehearsed steps past the first row of reporters to the spotlit table in front of them, draped in a blanket stamped with the World Cup logo, laden with mics pointing toward two folding chairs on the other side.

Ilya Rozanov is already seated in one of them.

His hair is pushed back. He's in a suit with no tie, and beneath the open top button of his shirt Shane can see his chain catching a camera flash.

Rozanov is leaning to the left, presenting his ear so some guy in a Bears polo can lean down and say something into it. He's nodding, a serious expression on his face, like he's listening intently.

But his eyes are on Shane.

Shane reaches the table. He gets his hand around the empty folding chair, draws it back along the carpet, the same blue as Toronto's uniforms. He sits down.

The flashes are slowing. The reporters, seemingly waiting for some signal that hasn't come yet, are speaking quietly among themselves. No one is writing anything down, yet. No one seems to have noticed anything.

No one except for—

Rozanov is turning away as the Bears staffer steps back from the table. He doesn't look at Shane as he reaches down, cups a palm over his microphone, and mutters without moving his lips, "You are hurt."

Shane flushes, gets a hasty hand over his own mic. "Not here," he hisses. Then he spends some time adjusting the microphone angle, like that's why he'd grabbed the thing in the first place.

The room is going quiet. A moderator is handing a mic to a reporter in the front row.

The reporter stands up. “Hi, guys,” she says. “Welcome to Toronto. This one’s for both of you. Shane, Ilya, how did you feel about the announcement today that you’ll be playing together in real game action for the first time when you represent the under-25 team at the World Cup of Hockey next fall?”

*

Back in Montreal the day prior, Coach Theriault had steepled his fingers under his chin after the team doctor finished speaking. “Well,” he’d said. “That is not good news.”

“I’m sorry, Coach,” Shane had said. Sitting there, beside the doctor in front of the desk in the coach’s office, he had felt like a misbehaving child being scolded.

Theriault had shaken his head, turned to stare at Shane. “How does it feel?”

“I think I can play on it,” Shane had said immediately. “It’s just— swollen, right now. But once that goes down, I think I should be good to skate.”

“Good, good,” Theriault had nodded. “Because— well, I don’t have to tell you this, but we’re in the playoff hunt.”

“Of course,” Shane had said.

“These next two weeks will be crucial. Lots of big points up for grabs.”

“Yes.”

“Big division matchup with the Bears this weekend.”

“Definitely.”

“I know we haven’t named a captain, yet,” Theriault had said. “But I’ve been impressed with the leadership role you’ve stepped in to here. And I know you’re going to be instrumental on leading the boys on a run.”

“Thank you,” Shane had said.

“Your long-term health comes first, obviously,” Theriault had said, before turning toward the doctor. “Keep checking up on him. Let me know if the swelling isn’t down enough to get a skate on by tomorrow.”

*

Whatever sadistic organizers put together World Cup media availability had, for some reason, arranged for the press room to be about as far away from the player areas as physically possible. Shane is forced to walk halfway around Toronto’s practice facility before he finally reaches the locker room where he’d stashed his stuff.

Shane is losing the battle against the grimace he can feel creeping up onto his face by the time he makes it inside.

He slows his pace as he walks through, checks each row of lockers, peeks under the curtains of the empty showers.

Once he's sure he's alone, he lets himself start to limp.

He staggers back to his locker, slowly lowers himself to the bench in front of it. Then he stretches his right leg gingerly out in front of him and says out loud, *"Fuck*."

When he pulls up the leg of his pants, he's half-expecting to see his ankle visibly throbbing. But the tape is holding tight. He can barely see the bulge through his dress sock.

He shuts his eyes. He thinks about giving up and asking for the injection.

When he opens them again, Rozanov is leaning against the row of lockers in front of him, hips out, arms belted over his chest.

Shane startles so badly he almost topples backward off the bench. "*Jesus*, Rozanov," he grumbles, righting himself. "Make some noise, will you?"

Only then does he remember to pull his hands back, let his pant leg drop.

It's far too late for that, obviously. Rozanov is already looking down at his ankle.

The way he's pursing his lips is accentuating his cupid's bow. The fingers of his right hand are tapping against his opposite elbow, like he's waiting impatiently for something.

Shane draws his feet back, tucks his legs in under him just to get them out of Rozanov's line of sight. "What?"

"You are hurt," Rozanov says again.

"No, I'm fucking not," Shane says mulishly.

Rozanov looks down, raises one eyebrow.

"I was just *stretching*," Shane snaps. "Don't you need to get changed? We have that photoshoot in the World Cup gear next, right?"

Rozanov doesn't move. His fingers are tapping faster. He says, "You should not walk like this."

"I can *walk,* Rozanov."

"Your team, do they know?"

"Doesn't seem like it's any of your business what the Voyageurs know, *captain*," Shane says.

A smile tugs at the corner of Rozanov's mouth. He unfolds his arms and leans forward, far enough that Shane is forced to tip his head back slightly to keep meeting his gaze. "Ah," he says. "I understand."

Shane can't stop his gaze from dipping down to Rozanov's torso. He's unbuttoned his jacket. The fabric of the dress shirt underneath is thin enough to reveal the faint shadow of the hair furring his taut stomach. "Understand what?"

"You are jealous," Rozanov says. "Because I am captain, and you are not."

Shane jerks his gaze back upward. Rozanov is smirking down at him. "That is *not* true."

Rozanov leans in closer. "I like it," he says, his voice low. He reaches up one hand, traces a 'C' over his heart. "My team, they say I 'boss around.' I like to boss around."

Shane swallows. Rozanov's face is so close, their noses are nearly touching. "Yeah?"

"Maybe I will be captain for World Cup," Rozanov says. "Maybe then I will boss around *you*."

Shane's lips part.

Rozanov barely has to lean toward him. His lips don't even brush Shane's. He just slips his tongue out and touches it to Shane's mouth.

Shane shudders, opens up for him.

Rozanov grunts, deep in his throat. He gets his hand under Shane's chin, squeezes. Then he presses in close. His mouth is soft when it closes over Shane's.

His other hand comes up, curls around the back of Shane's neck. He steps in closer.

And his dress shoe knocks into Shane's right foot.

Shane isn't sure what sound emerges from his throat. But whatever it is sends Ilya recoiling, pulling back, yanking his hands away like he'd touched something hot.

The skin on the back of Shane's neck and under his jaw feels abruptly bare, the spit drying on his lips cold. He shivers, reaches up to wipe at the back of his mouth with his sleeve. "I— What are we doing? We're in public. We're about to do a *photoshoot.*"

Rozanov isn't looking at his face. He's dropped his eyes back to Shane's ankle. "If I was your captain," he says, "I would make you go to doctor."

Shane sighs, follows Rozanov's gaze down his leg. He's under strict instruction from the Voyageurs not to talk about this with anyone outside the organization. Then again, they would probably have given him strict instruction not to make out with anyone from a rival team, had they known that might be an issue. "I've been to a doctor. It's just a sprain."

"A team doctor?" Rozanov wants to know.

Shane narrows his eyes. "Why does that matter?"

"Team pays doctor," Rozanov says. "Team says, 'Let Hollander play.'"

“There’s not some big conspiracy going on,” Shane grumbles. “I *want* to play. I told you, it’s just a sprain.”

“You will make it worse,” Rozanov says.

“I’ll be walking on it just for, like, another hour. I’ll be lazy for the rest of the day, okay?”

“I do not like it,” Rozanov says.

“We have four days until our next game.”

“I know,” Rozanov says. “Is in Boston. You will get hit.”

“It’ll be better by then,” Shane says stubbornly.

“Use crutch, then. For now. Keep weight off.”

“The Voyageurs are really, I don’t know, secretive about medical stuff. They don’t want me to publicize it, if I don’t have to.”

Rozanov is frowning. “They should at least give you, what is it?” He holds up one hand, mimes using his thumb to push down the plunger of a syringe. “Shot, so you won’t feel.”

“I said no to the shot,” admits Shane. “They make me feel— weird. All dizzy and unstable. I didn’t want to be on camera like that.”

“I do not like it,” Rozanov repeats.

Shane can’t help but crack a smile at how serious he looks. It’s nice, to have at least one person who’s unhappy he’s injured just because he’s hurt and not because of what it could cost them.

He doesn’t realize he’s leaning up and into Rozanov again until he notices his own hand twitching upward, like it’s about to reach for Rozanov’s face.

Shane frowns, shakes himself. He lets his hand drop. “Come on,” he says, and forces himself to turn away from Rozanov. He doesn’t bother to hide his wince as he hefts himself off the bench, forces himself back on his feet. “Let’s get dressed so we can get this over with.”

“This is stupid,” says Rozanov, but lets him go.

Shane steps toward his locker, grabs the shoulder pads hanging there. He hesitates, looks back over his shoulder at Rozanov. “How long are you— Are you flying back to Boston this afternoon?”

“Ah,” says Rozanov. “Yes. Photos, then airport.”

“Nice,” says Shane, and forces himself to look away.

*

“Well, of course they want you to play, sweetheart,” Shane’s mom says. “I know you want to play, too.”

Shane is leaning against the wall, his sneakers in the strip of dying grass between the wall of the Montreal training facility and the parking lot. The sweat drying in his hair is making him shiver, even with the hood of his sweatshirt pulled up.

“Obviously, I want to play,” he says. He pins the phone between cheek and shoulder so he can rub briskly at his own arms. “I guess I’d just thought they’d be—” he lowers his voice. “A little more worried I’m going to *really* mess something up. The trainer said there could be tendon damage, if I skate on it this soon.”

“I’m sure they wouldn’t push you if they didn’t think you could do it.”

“Yeah,” Shane says, slowly. “That’s true.”

“Do you know how much money hosting a single playoff game would bring this team?” Shane’s mom asks. “Not to mention the arena, and the city. And they’ve gone *seven seasons* without one. I can’t even *imagine* the pressure that poor coach of yours is under right now. Could you get your skate on today?”

Shane looks down at his shoes. “Yes.” He had left the laces on the right sneaker undone. His ankle, which he had barely been able to pry free from his skate, looks fat and swollen beneath the loose tongue of his shoe.

His mom says, “I’m proud of you, sweetheart.”

*

Rozanov spends the entirety of the national anthems glaring at him.

Shane glares right back from where he’s standing side-by side with his teammates in the red glow of the American flag being beamed onto the Bears logo at center ice.

Applause from the Boston crowd rumbles through the stadium as the anthem ends. The arena lights pulse into full brightness. Shane skates forward, traces a loose circle over the ice, splits from his wingers and glides toward the face-off dot.

Rozanov comes up opposite him, still glaring. As he bends forward beneath the puck held in the ref’s outstretched hand, he says, “You should not be playing.”

Shane bares his teeth at him around the mouthguard. “Not gonna disappoint them."

The puck drops. Shane wins the draw. The boos are so raucous he can almost feel them shaking the ice beneath him.

*

At one point, late in the third period, Shane sits down on the bench and can’t get up again.

The score is tied. His team needs him.

But when Theriault calls his name for the line change, Shane taps his coach's arm, gives a small shake of his head.

Theriault looks down at him for a moment. He nods, thumps Shane twice on the back. He doesn't say anything else, just calls for a trainer before turning back to the bench and shouting for the next man up.

Shane Hollander, second overall pick and would-be savior of the oldest franchise in hockey, immediately becomes about useful as the equipment bag slumped on the ground beside his throbbing right ankle.

The numbing shot hadn't been enough. He'd spent the whole game fighting the pain. He'd gritted his teeth and swallowed back the involuntary tears. But after his final shift, the moment he'd sat down on the bench, he'd known he wouldn't be standing back up without help.

What's worse is that he'd been a *liability* out there. Shane doesn't have Rozanov's shot. He can't just camp out somewhere and wait to get a pass he can slap into the net. His strength is his stupid *agility*. It's his ability to read plays and move quickly in reaction.

What fucking use is he, if he can't skate, if he can barely think clearly?

The line Shane should be skating on tries to set up something in the Bears' zone. They lose the puck to Rozanov. Shane's head turns to watch him fly past with it.

Rozanov throws up snow as he cuts to a stop at the edge of the crease. He winds up, fires.

It's a beautiful shot. He picks the corner perfectly. The Voyageurs goalie hasn't even finished lifting his glove to block the puck before it's in.

And then Rozanov is being tackled by shouting teammates, and the buzzer is sounding, the Boston crowd is erupting to its feet as the trainer closes his hand over Shane's shoulder. There are 48 seconds left on the clock, and the Bears are up by one.

Shane puts his head down. Stares down at his useless ankle. Bangs his visor twice, gently, against the edge of the bench door.

*

Shane thinks about not going to the address Lily texts him after the game. He considers it, he really does, while he's in the showers in the Boston locker room, hopping around with his bandaged ankle wrapped in plastic and the injection sites so fresh they're still weeping.

Then he thinks about licking Ilya's tongue in Toronto, and there's that familiar shiver at the base of his spine.

*

Rozanov's new place is stark, more like a hotel room than an apartment someone lives in. It's clear he hires someone to clean, and someone else to decorate, and that neither of them knew him particularly well. Shane wanders through the living room, touches his fingers to an oddly effeminate daffodil in a vase, studies the ugly abstract art hanging over the fireplace.

When he looks up, he finds Rozanov watching him from where he's standing beside the hulking black couch on the other side of the lamplit room.

Shane feels like he's been caught snooping. "Don't gloat," he says, too abruptly.

Rozanov looks at him. "Gloat," he repeats.

"You know, brag," Shane says. "About the game." It's hard not to feel silly glaring at Rozanov, right now, knowing he'd just finished celebrating with his teammates. Shane had barely been able to look his own guys in the eye afterward.

Rozanov says, "Is not good, for captain to brag. Maybe you will know this someday."

"Fuck off," says Shane. There's not much heat behind it.

"You are angry."

"I don't like losing," Shane says.

"You are hurt. Is not your fault."

Shane bristles. "I don't need *pity.*"

"I do not pity," Rozanov says. "I want you on the ice so I can beat you, too."

Shane can't help the smile that tugs at his lips. "You asshole."

Rozanov gestures toward the couch. "Sit," he says.

Shane hesitates. Rozanov hasn't told him whether to undress. He feels like usually, in his meet-ups with Rozanov, he would have been undressed by now. Then again, Rozanov would have usually touched him more, at this point.

He compromises, pulls off his hoodie, perches down in his t-shirt and track pants.

Rozanov sits beside him, on the same side of the couch. There is a gap, maybe the width of a palm, between their thighs. "You are high," he says.

Shane blinks. "Oh. Yeah, I— they gave me another shot after the game." They'd given him several, actually, before re-wrapping his ankle. He'd been in so much pain by that point it had been difficult to see clearly. Even now the edges of the room are swimming as he turns his head to stare at Ilya. Hard to think of him as Rozanov, in a moment like this. "Is that— is that okay?"

Ilya smiles. “You want my…” He visibly gropes for the word, comes up a moment later with, “Permission?”

Shane studies the dip of Ilya’s cupid’s bow. He can’t feel his right foot at all. He hadn’t realized how distracting the pain had been, until it was no longer distracting him.

“This makes sense,” Ilya says. “You want your captain to say, ‘Yes.’”

Shane smiles at him. It feels a little out of alignment on his face. “You’re not my captain.”

“Not yet,” Ilya says. “I will be. They will put it on World Cup jersey, right here.” He reaches out, puts the tips of two fingers to the front of Shane’s t-shirt, traces the shape of the ‘C’ over his heart.

He pauses, then, with just the tips of his two fingers pressing lightly at Shane’s chest through the fabric. When he looks up, his eyebrows are raised. “Your heart, it’s very fast,” he says.

“That’s because you’re touching me,” Shane mumbles.

“Your breath, also, it’s very quick. And I have just started.” Ilya’s fingers start moving again, tracing a light path over the front of Shane’s shirt. “The drugs, they make you horny?”

“Maybe a little,” Shane admits.

“I wonder how easy it is.”

Shane can feel heat rising in his cheeks. “How easy what is?”

“Making you come,” Ilya says.

It’s humiliating, knowing Ilya can feel that Shane’s heartbeat is starting to speed up. “You already know it’s easy.”

“With my hand on your cock, yes,” Ilya says. His fingers are tracing lower, now, dipping toward the waistband of Shane’s track pants, slipping under the hem of his shirt and onto the warm skin of his belly. “With my cock in you, yes. But without, I think— maybe yes, too. Sit on your hands.”

Shane had all but forgotten he *had* hands. They’d curled, when he wasn’t paying attention, into the couch cushion to either side. He slides them under his thighs and looks at Ilya.

Ilya says, “Good boy.”

Shane’s dick twitches against the slippery fabric of his track pants.

Shane notices. Ilya, who is looking intently at his lap— who had, Shane realizes with a rush of humiliation, been watching for it— notices too.

When Ilya glances up, he looks *hungry.* Slowly, without breaking eye contact with Shane, he slides that light two-fingered touch down, over Shane’s waistband, tracing lightly over the

outline of Shane's swollen dick.

Shane is finding it difficult to keep his breathing steady. The blur around the edges of the room is deepening. It's like his entire awareness has narrowed to those two fingers, tracing a circle over where the head of his dick is pushing up against the fabric.

"You are wet already," Ilya murmurs. Shane watches as his dick twitches again, up into the press of Ilya's fingers.

Shane is starting to pant. He looks up to see Ilya is staring at his mouth with his own lips parted. The lamplight catches at the sheen of his tongue.

On his dick, that light drag, that pressure that's *not enough*.

Shane feels his hips buck up, off the couch. His face turns toward Ilya's. He can feel Ilya's hot exhale against his mouth. "Please," he says.

Ilya's eyes flick up to meet his. His fingers trace up the length of Shane's dick, down again, moving the slippery fabric against the hot skin beneath. "Please, what?"

Shane's face is hot. He feels dizzy, overwhelmed. He's shaking as he leans up, tries to chase Ilya's mouth.

Ilya pulls away. His left hand comes up to plant squarely over Shane's collarbone, pins him back to the couch. The other is still slowly, so slowly, tracing the outline of Shane's dick through his pants. "Be polite," he says. "Ask."

"Please kiss me," Shane gasps.

Ilya leans in. He presses his closed-mouth smile to Shane's gasp, more of a nudge than a kiss, maddeningly chaste. And then he pulls away again.

Shane strains toward him, after his mouth, after the hand still slowly tracing the flexing outline of his dick. His fingers spasm where they're trapped under his thighs. "*Ilya.*"

Ilya's lips part. His left hand creeps upward, wraps gently around Shane's throat. The fingers on his Shane's dick press down hard, a moment of sweet pressure right on the head.

Shane shudders. His dick is *aching*. He can feel his shirt going damp at the collar, under the arms. He opens his mouth again, closes his eyes, waits, is rewarded when Ilya closes a hot kiss over his top lip.

He can feel his dick twitch up and into where Ilya's fingers are pressing into the damp fabric.

The fingers on his throat slide up, press at the hinge of his jaw, nudge for Shane to open his mouth wider. Ilya leans in and gives him a real kiss.

This time, Ilya slips his tongue inside. Touches it to Shane's. Circles it against the tip, just as his fingertips make the same movement over the fabric clinging to the head of Shane's cock.

Shane's eyes pop open. He arches off the couch, into those two fingers, with every muscle taut and straining.

Ilya sucks at the hot tip of Shane's tongue. He finally lets his hand go flat in Shane's lap, gives Shane the sweet, generous pressure of his palm to push up into.

Shane bucks, shudders, groans. His cock kicks, blurts into his pants.

Ilya grunts into Shane's mouth, pushes down on Shane's spasming cock. "Good boy," he says, slurred against Shane's lips. "Good, *good* boy." One hand is still cupped over Shane's twitching dick. The other pulls away from Shane's neck. Shane can feel Ilya's arm moving against him as he fumbles to push down his sweats.

"Let me," Shane pants into his mouth.

Ilya draws back. His mouth is red and messy, his gaze hot. His sweats are down to his thighs, his hand is on his cock. "You want?"

Shane is still shaking. His hands are starting to go numb beneath his thighs. "I want," he says, and licks his lips.

Ilya leans back, tears his shirt off, pulls his sweats hastily off his legs. Then he shuffles in, throws his knee onto the other side of Shane's thighs, leans in and presses his face to the side of Shane's neck. "Trust me?" he says, voice muffled.

Shane's fingers twitch with the urge to reach out and touch the sweat-lined dips of the muscles in Ilya's torso. "Yes," he says.

Ilya kisses his way up the side of Shane's face. He grips the back of the couch, plants his feet on the cushion to either side of Shane, stands.

Shane's head tips into the couch back. He looks at Ilya's dick, bobbing before his chin. He opens his mouth.

Ilya lets out a shaky word, something in Russian, not one of the curse words Shane's figured out by now. He gets a hand on the base of his cock. Slides it slowly in.

Shane's eyes droop, half-shut. He's still twitching with the aftershocks of an orgasm he hasn't yet decided was the best or worst thing he's ever felt. He imagines he can feel the medication seeping through his veins in place of blood. The edges of the room are gone, now. There's nothing but the couch against the back of his head and the weight of Ilya on his tongue.

Shane sighs through his nose. He relaxes his throat.

It's even easier now than it had been when he'd been practicing alone in his bedroom.

Ilya makes a startled noise, like he hadn't been expecting his dick to slide in that far. His hands come down to cradle the back of Shane's skull. "Oh, god, Hollander," he says, his voice too loud. "You are— you can— it's *tight*, I—"

Ilya's hips judder. His pelvis hits Shane's nose.

Shane can't taste it, when Ilya comes. But he can feel the jerk of the cock in his throat.

Ilya's fingers tighten in Shane's hair. He pulls Shane's head back from his dick slowly, carefully. He lowers himself to his knees on the couch beside Shane, curls in over him, thumbs away the tears from Shane's eyes, uses his fingers to wipe the drool from his chin.

Then he grips at the sides of Shane's face, hard, like he's trying to keep him in place, as if Shane was going anywhere. "Was okay?" he asks, his voice rough.

Shane smiles at him. He feels like he's floating an inch above the couch. "Yes," he croaks.

"Water," Ilya decides. He pulls back. He leans back in, busses a hasty kiss against Shane's hot lips, clambers off the couch and stumbles, naked, out of the living room.

Shane sinks back into the cushions, closes his eyes. His throat is aching. The mess in his pants is getting cold.

He's at Ilya's. He knows it's his job to say he has an early morning, to give some reason he has to get out of there.

When he opens his eyes again Ilya is back, raising a glass to Shane's face, fitting the edge of it carefully against Shane's lower lip. Tipping it slowly forward. Watching intently as Shane drinks.

Once Ilya lowers the glass, Shane licks a stray drop from his lips, looks at Ilya's face. He isn't sure he's ever seen Ilya's expression look that soft. Maybe it's just a trick of the lamplight.

"Did you like it?" Shane asks.

Ilya's eyes dip to his mouth. "Very much, yes."

Shane shuts his eyes. "That's good. I kind of feel like I've been fucking up everything else, lately."

Ilya doesn't say anything. He just reaches down, slowly pulls one hand out from under Shane's thighs, then the other. He rubs his thumbs down each tingling palm.

Shane knows his next line. He means to say it. Instead, what comes out is, "God, I'm tired."

Ilya wraps his fingers around Shane's, steps back from the couch, pulls him upward.

Shane doesn't ask any questions. He lets Ilya lead him through the living room, back through the kitchen and down a dark hall, into a bedroom lit only by the streetlights shining through the windows.

Ilya silently points toward a bathroom, connected through an open door at the back of the room.

Shane lets go of his hand, flexes his fingers, turns away to limp inside. He is suddenly so exhausted it seems like a miracle he's standing at all. He doesn't bother to close the door or turn on the light, just cleans himself off in the dark.

When he pads out into the bedroom, naked except for the wrap on his ankle, he finds Ilya sitting on the side of his bed. When he turns his face toward Shane, the shadows are so deep his eyes look like featureless hollows above the jut of his cheekbones.

"Could I borrow some pants?" Shane asks, quietly.

Ilya says pats the bed beside him. "Come here."

He limps back over, slowly lowers himself to the mattress, watches as Ilya stands up, digs in his dresser, returns with a pair of sweatpants.

Shane leans back onto the bed, slides them on his legs without standing up. He can feel the softness of the fleece even through the numbness radiating upward from his ankle. It's dark, and still, and quiet. His eyes are sliding shut again.

"Here," says Ilya, and Shane opens his eyes to find he is being guided backward, gently pulled further onto the bed. Shane lets Ilya arrange him, lets him pull Shane back until his legs are laid out on the mattress, until his head hits the pillows stacked at the head of the bed.

Ilya pulls away, then, shuffles around for a moment. Shane tips his head down to watch as Ilya leans down over his thighs, gets a careful grip under his right calf, and lifts his leg so he can slide a pillow under Shane's wrapped ankle.

Even in the dim light, Shane can make out how intent Ilya's expression is.

Something in Shane's stomach cramps. It threatens to pop the warm bubble of contentment that's been clouding his head. His toes twitch beneath the edges of the wrap. "I—"

"Is okay," says Ilya, immediately, maybe too quickly. Like he'd been worried about what Shane was about to say, even though Shane's not quite sure what that was going to be, himself. He gives the wrap over Shane's ankle a light pat, sits up.

He looks almost nervous, when he turns to Shane and smiles. "I told you," he says, his voice quiet. "I like to boss around."

Shane's eyes are drooping. "Thank you, captain," he says. It maybe comes out like less of a joke than he'd intended it to be.

Ilya certainly doesn't look like he's joking when he stretches himself out on the bed beside Shane, gets a hand under Shane's chin, turns Shane's face toward him.

Their kiss is chaste. Ilya's lips are warm. His fingers are shaking, just slightly, against Shane's jaw.

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