

how u remind me

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by [vividblossom \(dirtymudblood\)](#).

Summary

After an injury takes Shane's memory, Ilya is left as the only one who remembers.

Notes

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

It's so damn bright. The big, square ceiling lights are off but it's still *bright*.

He deduces he's in a hospital. It's not the first time hockey has sent him here, but *God* he hopes it's not the last either. His head is throbbing. Did he get hit? He attempts to wiggle his toes and sighs in relief when he feels them move.

Shane groans and attempts to push himself up off the bed. His arms aren't quite strong enough for his heavy body yet and so he huffs, waits a moment, and tries again.

This time, it's a gentle hand that presses him back to the pillow. The man above him, tutting and scolding him in what sounds like Russian, is familiar; but distantly so.

"I call nurse. Should be here soon, just relax."

Oh, he knows that voice. He's heard it many times on TV, in press conferences and one very memorable encounter during the draft in June, where Shane's body had reacted strangely to the man in front of him. It had only been a few months ago (hadn't it?) and yet, for some reason, Shane can barely recall the time in between.

Ilya Rozanov. Blinking down at him with unreserved concern. His large hand still pressed to Shane's sternum, rubbing soothing circles between his pecs. Shane is too shocked to say anything; how *long* had he been out?

Because the Rozanov in front of him looks sort of like the one he remembers, but *older*. His worried eyes are creased at the corners. His light brown curls, which had been short and tidy, now fall over his forehead and around his ears. There's a beard on his face. A *real* one. Not any beard Shane would think a nineteen year old could have.

"Rozanov? What are you doing here?"

Shane's voice sounds slurred and gritty. It's barely audible and so Rozanov seems to need a minute to form Shane's broken words into something comprehensible and then translate it. A furrow forms between his thick eyebrows.

He looks worried. Apprehensive.

"We are—"

"Mr. Hollander!" A cheerful voice comes from the door and Rozanov nearly jumps an entire yard back from Shane's bed. "Good to see you awake."

A perky nurse that reminds Shane of his mom slips in front of Rozanov at the side of Shane's bed. Rozanov presses himself against the far wall to give her more room when she wheels the blood pressure monitor next to Shane and starts to change the cuff size from "large adult" to "adult."

Shane blushes. He's never been the most muscular. His mom tells him all the time that his lean muscles are what keeps him fast and agile, nothing like the bulking biceps Rozanov has

as he crosses his arms tensely while he watches the nurse work. Why did Shane want to ask him to come closer?

The nurse pulls his focus. “Mr. Hollander, try to follow the light, m’kay?”

The pen light is blinding and Shane’s eyes immediately snap shut and he groans lowly.

“You are hurting him!” Rozanov accuses from his perch. Why does he care so much?

The woman ignores him and asks Shane, “What’s today’s date?”

“Em...” Shane opens his eyes and nervously looks over at Rozanov as if hoping the man will give him the answer. He doesn’t. Instead, his shoulders seem to slowly be creeping up to his shoulders. His entire body is tense. Shane wants to comfort him.

“I don’t know,” he answers truthfully. He thinks maybe November, but the nurse is wearing short sleeved scrubs and Rozanov has on basketball shorts. Not appropriate for Boston or Montreal, assuming that’s where he is, weather.

“Who is the current President?”

Shane frowns and Ilya reminds her, “Is Canadian.”

“Oh,” the nurse returns his frown. “I guess that wouldn’t work, then. Sorry, it’s a list of acute concussion evaluation questions. It’s alright if you don’t know.”

Shane does know, though. America just elected their first black president that January, it was all over the news. His mother in particular was elated and reminded Shane that it was important for people to see themselves in their role models, like he was for so many Asian-Canadian hockey players.

“Obama?” He says tentatively, just in case he may have said it wrong. He thinks he has, because the nurse and Rozanov are staring at him blankly.

“Mr. Hollander, what year is it?”

She looks at Rozanov again. The man’s usual golden skin pale and a little sickly. Shane wants to get up from the bed, he’s totally *fine* now, and offer it to him. Maybe he should tell the nurse to wheel over a chair—

“Hollander,” Rozanov says seriously. “What year it is?”

Shane awkwardly rubs his neck and is surprised by the long, soft strands there. How long was it? Was he in a fucking *coma*? Where were his parents? He feels so young. He wants to cry.

“I...I’m not sure. I thought...” he can’t keep his eyes off Rozanov who looks like he’s clenched up so tightly he might burst. “2009?”

The nurse gently pats his hand. He thinks she wants to say something else, but all she does is tell him that she’s going to get the doctor and leaves Shane and Rozanov alone again.

“I’m guessing that was the wrong answer,” Shane attempts to joke, but the other man isn’t laughing.

“Yes. Is wrong answer.”

“How wrong? What year *is* it?”

“Twenty-seventeen.”

Shane gasps. The sound hurts his head. Almost a ten *year* difference? He tries to think of anything from last year. Last week. Fucking *yesterday* and comes up with nothing. Just hazy, inconsequential time. He’s nineteen, almost twenty. He’s just been drafted to the Montreal Voyageurs. He’s going to win the Stanley Cup.

Has he already? A decade is a long time. What did his life look like? His heart begins to pound, the monitor connected to him beeps wildly and Rozanov looks alarmed.

Thankfully, for Rozanov, a doctor and half a dozen nurses rush in. Shane is being poked and prodded and a thermometer is stuck in his mouth so he can’t yell out for Rozanov when he notices the man slip out of the room.

“We contacted your parents,” the white coat in front of him says. “They’re catching a flight to Boston right now.”

Ten years. What has he missed in ten years?

Surprisingly, it’s hard to fit a decade of information into a few days. His parents try their best while staying within the perimeters of his neurologists guidelines. Don’t overwhelm him, surround him with familiar things, let the memories come naturally.

His parents fly to Boston where they stay with Shane for the 24 hour watch before renting a car to drive all the way to Montreal. He begs his dad to pull over at a hotel so that he could get a room to shower. He smells like ammonia and hospital-grade laundry detergent and is desperate for a hot shower.

His parents agree, but not without coming to the room *with* him to ensure he doesn’t lay down on the soft looking hotel bed and fall asleep. He looks at it longingly.

His mom sits at the small table with her laptop and glasses on while his dad watches the news, muted for Shane’s benefit. She’s been on the phone since they arrived at the hospital, after they were assured Shane was going to be fine. He doesn’t know who she’s talking to. His agent? Did he have the same one? His coach? He hears the words “Rolex” and “Reebok” a few times and inside the hotel lobby there is a magazine with his face on the cover holding a cologne bottle.

Shane tips his head back and lets the hot water run over his face and down his neck. Rozanov. He can't stop thinking about him. The guy had, apparently, spent upwards of six hours in the hospital room waiting for Shane to wake up. Even Shane's coach had left, what vested interest did the captain of the opposing team have in being at his bedside?

Captain. Not only is he still playing for Montreal, but he's the *captain*. He's won Stanley Cups. As in plural. He's lived a life he's always dreamed of and he can't remember a goddamn thing about it.

He doesn't blame Cliff Marlow, even though he's sure everyone else is. Mom began her tangent in the car before Shane complained of a headache and they rode in silence for the remainder of the drive. Maybe Rozanov was worried that Shane would, he doesn't know, file a complaint with the commission or something.

When his dad had turned on the hotel television initially, a sports channel was highlighting the game and speculating about the extent of Shane's injury before his dad flipped the channel to something more mundane. But Shane had seen the initial impact and, yeah it was a dirty hit but there were dirty players and that's the risk of the game he loves so much.

Shane turns off the shower, wraps the fluffy towel around his waist, and stands in front of the foggy mirror. With his forearm, he wipes away enough of the steam to see his face, add ten years, for the first time.

He's thankful he doesn't look all that different, but a little annoyed about it as well. He'd hoped that one day he'd lose some of the baby fat on his face, but it has kept him looking enviably youthful. He opens his mouth. Well, at least he has all his teeth still. That's a victory in itself.

When he exits the bathroom, his mom is off the phone. She smiles tenderly and presses a kiss to the wet hair at his temple.

"Doctor called," she tells him. "You're cleared for longer intervals of sleep, but we'll still need to wake you up every few hours."

Shane nods. He wishes they could stay in this Boston hotel room so he could sleep on the comfy bed, but he knows they should get on the road if they want to make it into Canada at a decent time.

Shane steals a pillow from the room and leaves a very big American bill for housekeeping to cover the loss. They load him into the back seat and Shane feels a little silly that his dad insisted on him wearing a seatbelt even while laying across the bench seat.

The skyline passes and Shane sees through the windshield the exit out of Boston. He doesn't know why, but an anxious feeling bubbles inside of him. He feels like he's left something important behind, but he can't *remember*.

Frustrated, he punched the stolen pillow a few times before laying his head in the crease. He falls asleep to the memory of Rozanov, his soothing touches, his low voice telling Shane to—

“Relax for me, Hollander. That’s it– Relax.”

His parents take him to his condo. He has a *condo*. And it’s *nice*. He has, like, decorative pillows and art on the wall. He has a TV bigger than he thought possible for one to be and the picture is so *clear*.

His mom clicks the remote to turn it off.

“You need to limit your screentime,” she scolds. “And *rest*. Go on. Dad is gonna drive back to Ottawa and get our things so we can stay and look out for you for the rest of the week.”

Shane swallows his guilt and frustration. He feels bad that his dad is about to spend upwards of eight hours in the car today and, even though his memories are still young, he *feels* like a grown man who doesn’t want his mom and dad hovering over him.

But that’s the reality of being an only child and having loving, amazing parents and so Shane tries to feel grateful instead.

He walks into his bedroom and for the first time in two days, he feels like himself. Has he not bought new sheets in a decade or does future him still prefer them? The thought is comforting; the fact that perhaps he hasn’t changed so much. That he still knows himself.

He crawls across the king bed diagonally and closes his eyes, but he slept almost the entirety of the drive to Montreal, save for one break in the middle where his mom had to wake him up, and so now he’s restless.

He doesn’t like that he doesn’t know what he doesn’t know. It makes him anxious and a little afraid. He reached into his sweatpants and takes out his phone. His mom had given it to him with the promise that he stay off it and only use it to call if he needed something, but Shane turns the night-shift on and lowers the brightness to lessen the strain on his head.

The first thing he does, obviously, is Google himself. He’s never been in the habit of doing so. That’s more someone like Rozanov’s prerogative, so see what everyone has to say– why the fuck is he still thinking about Rozanov?

He scrolls, but the search is monopolized by the game two days ago and different interviews with no comment from Boston and well wishes from fans. One article does spark his interest; *Mother Bear: Ilya Rozanov Furious after Teammate’s Cheapshot*.

It’s a fluff article from a gossip website that was around in 2009 and probably gets very little traction now, if the thousands of popups advertising porn is anything to go by. Shane is a little worried he might get a virus (can phones like these get viruses? It looks like a tiny computer and more complex than the iPhone 3G he remembers having last), but he’s too curious.

The body of text is nothing but speculation over he said, he said, but there's a small video attachment. Shane clicks the play button and sits through another sixty seconds of ads, Jesus Christ, before it finally plays. It's the moments after Shane falls to the ice and his team is being sent to the sidelines to make room for medical personnel, but Rozanov is glued to Shane's side and looking as pale as he did in the hospital room.

The video cuts to a wannabe reporter in front of a greenscreen and Shane sacrifices a future headache to turn up the volume.

"... sources say the Boston locker room was not happy with Marlow's stunt, least of all captain Ilya Rozanov," she pronounces his name incorrectly, which makes Shane irrationally annoyed. If you're going to report on people, shouldn't you do your research? *"... who was later seen exiting the hospital after a visit."*

Shane uses his finger to rewind the video. He's on the ice and he looks like he's saying something to Rozanov, but he can't quite make out what. Rozanov's gloved hand is fisted in his jersey before paramedics have to force him off.

Shane plays the video two more times before realizing he just wants to look at Ilya Rozanov and quickly shuts the browser. He stares at the home screen and all the familiar apps before braving his messages. Mom had shown him how to quiet notifications and so Shane is shocked by all the blue-dot unread texts he has. There's one from someone named JJ and another from an H. Pike and more from numbers Shane doesn't have saved asking how he's doing. He scrolls down a bit until a name catches his attention.

He was the last one to text *OK just a sec* after Lily asked to Skype. At least that had been around in 2009 too and Shane knows that it's a video call application. He scrolls their messages and they haven't texted a *lot*, but they are obviously familiar with each other. Shane tries to remember anyone named Lily, but just like everything else from the last decade of his life; he comes up empty.

They're hooking up, he realizes after reading a few raunchy texts from Lily that make him blush down to his toes. His initial reaction is relief. Because Lily is a *girls* name and that must mean he's *not*... It must mean that reaction to Rozanov in the hotel gym was a fluke. Adrenaline. Anxiety. Normal. Shane is normal and he likes women and he's hooking up with a girl named Lily.

She seems a little... dominate. He's not sexist or anything, God no, but Lily has the vocabulary fit for a locker room. Is Shane into that? He tries to imagine a soft, pretty thing telling him what to do, being on top, and nothing physical happens. It must be the injury.

Desperate for some connection to his new self, Shane impulsively types, *Hi*, and waits for a response. It comes in minutes, like Lily was just waiting for him to reach out.

Lily: *Christ Hollander are you OK? You gave me scare. Can I call?*

Shane bites his bottom lip, his heartrate picking up. Does he want her to call?

Shane: *I can't. I have a concussion.. Did you see what happened?*

Maybe it's a stupid question considering it's *everywhere* in the news and if Shane is important to this Lily she probably keeps up with his games, but he doesn't want to assume.

Lily: *?? of course? What do u mean?*

Shane: *I'm sorry. I have a concussion. I don't remember anything after the middle of 2009.*

Lily: *You do not know me?*

Shane frowns. It's a little odd, the way Lily phrases that.

Shane: *I don't.. I'm sorry. But I looked at our messages. I think we're important to each other.*

There's a long pause before Lily responds again. Shane bites his thumbnail in anticipation.

Lily: *Yes. Very important. I'm sorry you do not remember.*

The breath rushes out of Shane in relief that she won't leave him hanging.

Shane: *Are you my girlfriend?*

He feels bad asking, but he doesn't know the extent of their relationship and it'll help him navigate the rest of the conversation.

Lily: *Girlfriend??*

Shane: *OK so no. Sorry*

Lily: *Stop with the sorry. I am not your girlfriend, Hollander.*

Shane isn't sure why, but he feels his bottom lip wobble. He hoped... He doesn't know what he hoped. That he wouldn't be alone in 2017, that's for sure. He didn't know he was someone to have casual sex either.

After a few minutes of Shane not responding, his phone vibrates again.

Lily: *You have app looks like calculator. Password is 2481*

Confused, Shane flips through the list of downloads and finds one on the very last page of his homescreen that must be what Lily is referencing. When he opens it, the fake calculator prompts him for a code.

Something like dread stirs in his belly. The screen changes and Shane smacks his phone facedown on the comforter, his heart racing. That's a dick, but it's not *his* dick. Holy shit. Holy *shit*. He's *gay*? But he's... that's... and *Lily*...

Shane doesn't pick up the phone again, even when he hears another incoming notification. He closes his eyes and is rewarded by the onslaught of a pounding headache.

Gay? Him? Well... He supposes his interest in girls was never on par with how his friends described. Losing his virginity had been an awkward, disappointing affair for everyone involved. His eyes shoot open. Fuck. He'd had sex, *gay* sex. And it was good enough that his texts had seemed ravenous for it again and again.

He squirms a little against his sheets. Yup. Definitely gay.

There's a soft knock at the door and he quickly pretends to be asleep. He can't face his parents, not after this revelation and not while semi-aroused. Footsteps creep to his bed and a weight presses next to him.

"Shaney-binski," his dad whispers, a very old nickname from when Shane was a baby. "Just need to make sure you're alright."

Shane grumbles a convincingly sleepy affirmative and then, with a gentle pat to his arm, his dad leaves again.

Does he know? Does his mom? Does *anyone*? Certainly not anyone in hockey or it would be everywhere and he can't imagine Montreal would be too keen to have a queer player, even one as good as Shane.

He falls asleep worrying and any dream he could have had is interrupted by either of his parents diligently waking him. Around six in the morning, he gives up the fight and opens his phone again.

Lily: *Did I scare you?*

It was sent last night and there's no follow up. Maybe Lily thinks Shane took it badly. Okay, maybe he didn't take it all that *great* but he's fine. He's gay. And Lily has obviously kept this secret for long enough that Shane doesn't have to worry about dealing with an injury *and* coming out.

Shane: *I'm not scared. Is your name really Lily?*

It's ten excruciating minutes before Lily replies. It could have been hours, Shane doesn't know many normal people who wake up this early on a Saturday, but maybe Lily is working or... something. Shane wishes he could remember anything about him.

Lily: *lol no. Was precaution. You are semi-famous yu know. We were being careful.*

Shane frowns, a little offended.

Shane: *I'm regular famous.*

Lily: lollll

Lily: *Send me pic of you*

Shane: *Why?*

Lily: *Want to see if you are ok with my own eyes*

Ah, God. He's really, *really* gay because everything inside of him is melting like goo over such a simple show of affection by this random man. A man who has probably fucked him. From Shane's perusal of his phone, he and Lily haven't exchanged face pictures for safety reasons so Shane sends a back-camera photo of a thumbs up.

A little slyly, he makes sure his sweats and bent knee are in the photo but not an obvious point of attention.

Shane: **image attachment**

Lily: *There he is.*

Lily: *OK now point camera lower*

Shane smiles and covers his face with his pillow. He laughs incredulously. It hurts his head like hell, but it's the best he's felt in two days. The future doesn't seem so lonely.

Shane is benched. Worse than benched, he doesn't even have his gear on. Instead, he sits next to his coach in Montreal merch, arms crossed, as he watches his team warm up.

"Stop pouting, Hollander," his coach, who is sort of a dick, tells him. "It's just precaution."

Precaution. Shane *hates* that word now. It's all he's heard over the past week. No, no no because *precaution*. He knows he can play. Even more, he knows he can play *well*. Even his gameplay at nineteen was better than most of the seasoned pros and that's not even being egotistical.

But his doctors had agreed and his coaching team had agreed and once Yuna Hollander agreed, Shane knew it was useless to fight. He knows the team is worried he wouldn't be able to remember their plays, but he's their *captain*. That comes with obligations, responsibilities. Not having their captain can cause game upsets; as shown by Boston now leading 3-1.

The few Boston fans in the arena go nuts as Ilya Rozanov expertly skates past the rookie Voyager Dennis Mulinovo to smack the puck into Montreal's goal.

Shane watches Rozanov celebrate with his team when the buzzer rings. Well, most of his team. The captain is obviously giving the cold shoulder to Cliff Marlow, who is left out of the hug-puddle. Shane notices he's smiling and quickly schools his features before his team comes back to the box. Their heads are ducked and they all look tense. Shane can't help but feel guilty. They didn't just lose, they were *destroyed*. And it isn't Shane's *fault* he's been left out of the game, but he hates to see the drawn faces as they rip their helmets off.

There's no reason for Shane to be in the locker room so he just... doesn't go in. He probably should. A good captain would go in there with a post-game pep talk and rally the players to think of their next win and then console Dennis Mulinovo that no one scores hat tricks in their first NHL game. No one except Shane Hollander and Ilya Roznov.

But Shane doesn't feel very much like a captain right now. And he doesn't really know the guys on the team. In his head, he's only just been drafted and the few familiar faces are players who happened to play ten years ago.

Hayden Pike is apparently his best friend. Everyone tells him, even *Hayden* tells him when he comes to visit the day after Shane returned to Montreal from Boston. Hayden tells him that they've been best friends since Shane's rookie season and he was one of the first people to hold his son, Arthur, when he was born and Hayden's wife makes Shane special rabbit food when he comes over so that he *will* come over.

He scrolls through his camera roll and shows Shane photos in an attempt to jog his memory. Photos from the planes, buses, on the ice, group outings, in their tuxes during awards. Hayden had gotten to their first Stanley Cup win and Shane had to fake a headache, to which his mom thoroughly chastised Hayden for the extended screen time, because he's just so *frustrated* that he can't remember all these wonderful moments of his life. What if he *never* remembers?

"Your team missed you on the ice today," a thick accented voice says from the end of the hallway. "My team not so much."

"Fuck off," Shane says, but he laughs. Rozanov saunters to sit on the bench next to him and sighs when he throws himself into the seat like his muscles hurt. Shane stares at the line of exposed, hairy legs and corded muscles of Rozanov's thigh.

He swallows and clears his throat. "Enjoy it while you can. I'll be back on the ice by the time we play you guys next."

"You mean they will not make Mulinovo starter?" He asks in fake shock.

"Shut up. It was his first game. No one's that good to start out with."

"We were," Rozanov says simply, reiterating a thought Shane had secretly had. "But not everyone is you and me, yes?"

"Well, I can't see why anyone would want to be *you*."

"Excuse me. Am handsome, very good at hockey..."

Shane waits for him to go on and laughs incredulously. "That's *it*?"

"Babies and animals love me. They can read, how do you say, vibes?"

"Vibes," Shane is grinning so hard his cheeks hurt. "Right."

Rozanov rubs his hands together in what Shane might think is a nervous gesture. “So. I was thinking, maybe we get something to eat. Captain to captain.”

“Tonight?” Shane asks incredulously.

“Would be hard tomorrow when I am in Boston and you are still here with your broken head.”

“Shut up, Rozanov,” Shane rolls his eyes. “Just... why? Shouldn’t you be with your team, I don’t know, celebrating?”

Rozanov waves him off like it’s a non-issue.

“We win all of the time. I will be there for the next hundred celebrations, they will not miss me during this one. Think of it as apology for my teammate giving you broken head.”

Shane laughs. “My head isn’t *broken*, asshole. But. Alright, I guess. Where do you want to go?”

It’s polite, even with Shane’s insanely specific diet, to refer to the other person for opinions. Even if Shane can only get a glass of sparkling water, he’ll make do. Rozanov looks like he shovels down simple carbs and trans-fat.

He surprises Shane by saying, “Sushi okay?”

Shane blinks. “Yeah, actually. That’s... Are you sure you don’t want something more— I thought Russians only ate goat and pickled things.”

Rozanov stands with a roll of his eyes and offers Shane his hand to stand up. “We will go to all you can eat. I’m sure they will have something other than raw, calorie-less fish on menu.”

Shane smiles shyly and takes the offered hand. Rozanov hoists him up so quickly Shane nearly falls into him.

“Sorry,” he says and Rozanov turns away with a scoff. If Shane didn’t know better, he’d think the man was *blushing*.

“Stop with sorry,” Rozanov says, which niggles something in the back of Shane’s brain. Had he heard that before? “We go now, yes? You did not play but I am very hungry from the hard work.”

“Fuck you,” Shane says before he and Rozanov race to the exit, bumping each other along the way.

They're offered a private, intimate table directly next to where they prepare the sushi. Rozanov seems amazed by the preparation and quick slices of the knife to make perfect, delicate pieces. Shane allows the time Rozanov looks away to stare at him.

He's always thought Rozanov was handsome. Hot. But now he's *sexy*; older and muscled and carrying himself with confidence and maturity. Shane blushes and focuses on eating his sashimi.

The dinner is... really nice, actually. Rozanov eats so much that Shane is worried the kitchen will cut him off, but then the man throws his napkin on an empty plate of what was once a pile of short ribs.

"Am full to bursting," he groans and Shane laughs.

He's been doing that all night. Laughing. He hasn't been this carefree and happy since... Well, he doesn't remember. Obviously. But certainly not since he woke up from the hospital. He still wants to ask Rozanov about all that, but they barely even talked about the injury or the game that caused it.

They spent dinner discussing Shane's diet (which Rozanov teased him for), the upcoming playoffs (which they argue over whose team will make it to), and the differences between Boston and Montreal (they each think their own cities are better).

By the time the check comes and they step out into the cool, April night; Shane finds he doesn't want this to *end*. He's had such a good time tonight, not thinking of his injury or his lost memories or the unsureness of his hockey career.

Rozanov doesn't seem in a rush, either. His hands are stuck inside his pocket and he fishes out cigarette before casting a look to Shane and giving him a sheepish look.

"Is addiction! I cannot help it."

"They say the hardest step is putting the first one down."

And Rozanov smiles so softly at him that it takes Shane's breath away. "Yes. I have heard that before."

They lapse into an awkward, but not uncomfortable, silence.

"I should—"

"Would you like to—"

They both pause.

"You first," Rozanov insists.

"Just... It's still early. I can't drink, you know, cause of my head, but I have some randomly good vodka at my apartment. You know, Russian. It was probably a gift, but I don't

remember. So. I don't even remember if I like vodka all that much and wouldn't want it to go to waste. So."

Rozanov blinks at him. "That was so many words for simple invitation."

Shane's face is hot and probably very red, and he opens his mouth to apologize but one arched eyebrow from Rozanov and Shane laughs breathlessly.

"Fuck you. Do you wanna come over or not?"

"Russain vodka you said? Let's go. Canadians do not deserve such good quality. Whoever bought for you was a fool."

Rozanov turns away to hail a cab and Shane tucks his bottom lip in between his teeth to stop his stupid smiling from spreading wider on his face.

Shane's parents went home that Wednesday after Shane was able to sleep through the night and they were confident that he would keep up with his medication and so he opens his apartment door to complete silence.

It still feels odd. That this is his home, but doesn't feel like it. It feels too big for one person, for just him, but then Rozanov pushes past him and the space suddenly seems warmer. Not as overwhelmingly huge. Shane sucks in a regulating breath and shuts the door behind him.

"Vodka is over there," he tells Rozanov, who makes a beeline for the bar cart. "And glasses..."

Shane pauses. He still doesn't know the layout all that well. The past few days have been a lot of opening and shutting cabinet doors and opening and shutting closets.

Rozanov... Doesn't seem to need his direction. The man uncorks the vodka on his way to the kitchen and immediately opens the correct cabinet to retrieve a shot glass and fills it with vodka.

He mumbles a curse in Russian when a few drops slosh and spill onto the counter and Shane watches in amazement as Rozanov immediately knows where to find the paper towels in the beautiful, but useless holder.

"Have you been here before?" Shane teases and Rozanov freezes halfway through wiping up the spilled alcohol.

"Why do you ask this?"

"I'm kidding," Shane slowly joins him in the kitchen and attempts to lean casually against the counter. "You just... seem to know where everything is. I can still barely find the bathroom."

“Ah. I have perfect explanation.”

“Yeah?”

“I am stalking you,” he says with fake seriousness. “I look through your window to see which place you keep the cups, in case I need stupid fancy glasses.”

Shane belly laughs. “Through my window? We’re on the sixteenth floor.”

“Humble brag. My apartment is on eighteenth.”

Rozanov takes a large gulp of the liquor and moans at the taste. Shane feels the sound vibrate in his fingertips, all the way down to his belly where it turns into molten lava. He licks his lips as if he could catch a taste on the vodka on his mouth.

“Is it good?”

“Is the *best*, ” Rozanov corrects. “No one does it like Russia. American vodka is made with corn. *Blech*. Blasphemy. And Canadian vodka is probably made with maple. You all like too sweet liquor.”

Shane’s smile is probably so damn cheesy and soft, but he can’t help it.

“Your English... How did you get so good?”

Rozanov seems surprised by the question, maybe even a little embarrassed. He clears his throat before leaning against the edge of the kitchen island so he and Shane are right in front of each other. Their feet nearly touch in the narrow space.

“I read New York Times,” he jokes blandly. “Do the crosswords.”

Shane bites his lip and looks down at their feet. If he just moved even an inch, he could graze Rozanov’s with his own. He looks up to catch Rozanov’s dark eyes. In the dim, yellow light of Shane’s kitchen he looks like a golden statue of a God. He towers over Shane, even slumped with his hip propped against the marble.

“My dad loves the New York Times,” he says shyly, not sure why it’s important that Rozanov has a link to the most important man in Shane’s life. Shane looks back up to catch Rozanov’s dark eyes. He looks like a golde

“Of course,” Rozanov scoffs. “So being boring is, what, genetic?”

Rozanov has such a pretty mouth. Such a strong, manly jaw and thick beard, but framing such plush lips. He takes another sip of the vodka and his bottom lip comes away wet. Fuck the alcohol ban, Shane wants to suck the liquid from that lip.

“Wow,” he whispers, a little dazed. “Genetic.”

The air feels charged. Rozanov is looking back and forth between his eyes with a question Shane doesn’t know the answer to. It’s almost... imploring. Like he *needs* Shane to

understand something. But what?

Shane's face must not give Rozanov the answer he was looking for. For a moment, the man's face looks exhausted and worn and... and heartbroken, a little. He breaks eye contact and Shane wants to beg him to come *back*, but Rozanov just tips his head back to finish the glass and Shane watches his throat work and bob, before he sets the empty glass on the counter.

"I should be going."

"Oh. Really?"

"Yes," but he doesn't sound happy about it. The word seems to be strangled out of him.

"Early flight back to Boston in the morning and we have night game against Rangers."

"Oh," Shane knows his voice is disappointed and sad, but he can't help it. He really doesn't want Rozanov to go. Why? "Okay. Good luck."

Rozanov's face transforms into the cocky smirk Shane is most familiar with. "Do not need it, is just New York. But thanks."

Shane walks him to the door. Unnecessary because the kitchen to the living room to the front door is all within sight, but he's holding on to the moment a little bit. Rozanov seems hesitant to leave as well.

"You will be in Boston in two weeks, yes?"

Shane nods, not trusting his voice. He licks his lips and Rozanov's eyes shoot down briefly to track the movement before looking up again.

"Good. I hope you will be on ice by then. Is boring to play not against you."

Oh God, Shane wants to kiss him. He can't, but he wants to do badly his teeth ache with it.

"Yeah," he whispers. "It's boring if it's not you too."

Rozanov leaves and Shane stares at the empty hallway for a long time before finally closing the door.

A text comes to his phone an hour later.

Lily: *bad game today. You will get them next time. Fuck cliff Barlow.*

And Shane's smile returns.

Shane sees Rozanov two weeks later at an away game in Boston. Shane is tentatively cleared to join his team on the lineup and even though he knows their chances are more than shot from the amount of losses they took while he was out he still wants to do good. He wants to prove he can do this.

They skate to the face off and Shane tries very hard not to look at Rozanov. He's nervous enough as it is without the complicated feelings he has in the mix.

He's been a little obsessed with Rozanov lately. It's taken everything in him not to stalk the guy's socials or Google his name just to see a picture. But when Rozanov's photos appear on a build board or an ad; Shane takes way too long to scroll past it.

He can sense Rozanov's eyes on him. Shane's cheeks heat and he ducks his head to avoid his gaze.

"Hollander, relax."

Shane feels a sense of déjà vu. The last time Rozanov said this to him, his hands were on Shane, his voice was a low, soothing murmur. Now, he's a foot away and has to yell over the sounds of screaming fans.

"I'm fine," he says around his mouthguard.

"You maybe do not remember, but your body will. You are a very okay player, it will be fine."

Shane is stunned by the show of sportsmanship. It feels more, though. Maybe he's readying too much into it. Maybe he has a fat, gay crush on Boston's captain and now he sees everything through those lenses.

The game does turn out fine. Shane's not at peak performance, but having him on the ice seems to get his team back into shape. They win 2-1 after an exhausting back and forth with the puck.

Rozanov catches him before he gets off the ice. "See? I told you, Hollander. The body remembers."

Shane can't respond before Hayden and the others are hauling him away in victory. He looks back to find Rozanov with a small smile, watching Shane be carried away. Only then does Shane allow himself to feel the win.

He's tying his sneakers when his phone chimes.

Lily: *Nice game. Shame about Boston*

Shane: *I still can't believe you're a bears fan. I should have known from the tattoo*

Lily: *Better than voyager tattoo. Whatever that would be lol*

Shane shakes his head and leaves the locker room with a smile.

Shane hasn't been *avoiding* the team, but he hasn't put a lot of effort into seeing them either.

It's just that the only times he's made the effort, he feels out of place. There are memes he doesn't know, slang that doesn't make sense, inside jokes he can't remember.

It's been two months since the accident and his memory hasn't improved by much. He'll randomly recall a teammate's stats or little things like where he put his favorite sweater, but most everything else is hazy.

His biggest confidant is Lily, a man he still doesn't know the real name of or the face of. Only the body. The insane, ripped abdomen with the bear tattoo across his pec. They text every night and Lily assures Shane, and probably himself, that everything will be alright. That one day Shane will remember himself, remember Lily, and everything will go back to normal.

A new problem has arisen, however. The problem that Shane can't stop thinking about Ilya Rozanov and he feels guilty for it. He doesn't tell Lily this, of course, but he wishes he could. He wishes he could say *sometimes I wish you were him because I trust you but I want him so badly, why can't I have both?*

The dreams are the worst of it. Shane has filthy, naughty dreams about doing things he never thought possible; riding Rozanov in his living room with his feet planted on the ground, Rozanov's tongue shoved in his ass, Rozanov watching him jerk off from a chair at the end of a bed.

Shane wakes up every morning with soiled underwear and a sticky, spent cock. It's madness. Shouldn't his libido calm down by the time he's this age? He feels like it's only getting more intense.

And they feel so *real*. He can close his eyes and imagine the taste of Rozanov's mouth, how his moans and whimpers sound, the coolness of a crucifix dragging across his back—

"You alright?"

Shane blinks back into awareness. Hayden's wife, Jackie, is touching his arm with concern. Shane smiles apologetically. Right. He was talking about the team.

He hasn't been avoiding them, but it's impossible to decline an invitation to watch the cup with your team and so here Shane is, sitting in Hayden Pike's living room with his wife and children and fellow teammates and Shane is for some reason still thinking of Ilya Rozanov's dream-dick.

"I'm fine," he assures her. He likes Jackie a lot. And their million children. "Seriously."

“I know they can be a lot,” she whispers to him with a pointed look to where the others are yelling at the TV. Shane had come into the kitchen for a seltzer to get away from the noise. “But you can always hang with me and Artie.”

The baby coos and reaches for Shane, who lets the baby boy grab his finger in an impressively tight hold.

“Thanks, Jackie. I’m gonna head back in now.”

Shane resumes his spot on the couch next the Hayden and JJ.

“*Fuck this guy*,” JJ curses in French on TV where Boston’s Cliff Marlow makes a shot. “He takes out our *capitaine* and now he’s going to take the Cup.”

“Unbelievable,” Hayden murmurs. “Not as bad at this guy though.”

The camera is pointed on Rozanov, who gives Marlow an obligatory fist bump. Boston is up 2-1 and it’s not looking so good for New York, who just had their goalie carted off the ice with a puck to the neck. Shane grimaces.

“I bet he is *thrilled* that we didn’t get to the playoffs,” JJ mutters. “He probably sent his boy after Shane, *ah?*”

Shane swallows, a surge of protectiveness washing over him. “He’s actually not so bad.”

Everyone goes silent and he can *feel* their eyes on him. He fiddles with the can in his hand.

“I just mean... he came to see me in the hospital. And he apologized for what Barlow did. So.”

“True,” One of the other linemen agree graciously. “He can be a fucking asshole and still be a decent person, I guess.”

There are mumbled agreements before they turn back to the TV. Sometime in the conversation, Boston had made another goal with only a few minutes left. Other teams, other players, may relax at this point. It would take a miracle for New York to come back. But miracles *do* happen and so Shane understands when Rozanov continues to put his entire soul into his plays.

“Jerk,” someone grunts as they watch Scott Hunter be checked into the wall by Rozanov. It probably seemed unnecessary. But Hunter had the puck and Rozanov knew as well as Shane did not to gamble with absolutes.

The buzzer goes off and Boston goes *wild*. It’s their second Cup in almost a decade after Montreal’s winning streak and Toronto’s upset last year. Chicago had taken them out before the playoffs the year before that.

Everyone is hugging, hugging, crying. On the TV, they play Boston’s goal song and the entire arena sings along. The players take turns kissing the trophy before passing it to their captain. Rozanov lifts it with a wide grin.

“For you,” he shouts and Shane wishes he knew who Rozanov was talking to. *“I will never forget!”*

After the game, Hayden corners him before he can slip out.

“Hey,” he says awkwardly, “Thanks for coming tonight.”

“I’m sorry we didn’t make the playoffs.”

Hayden waves him off. “It wasn’t you, it was that asshole Barlow. I hate that he’s going home with the win tonight, but I’m not the one he hurt so if you can forgive, I guess I can too.”

Shane nods, unsure of what to say.

“How are you feeling?” Hayden asks after a moment. “Like, physically. Emotionally. Spiritually?”

Shane cracks a smile. “I’m doing alright. I’m... listen, I’m sorry I’ve even such a shitty captain— no, seriously. I know I’ve kinda dropped the ball but, I heads, thanks for inviting me tonight. And making the effort.”

Hayden’s eyebrows crease in earnest. “Of course. Shane, of *course*. This... no one deserves this, but especially not you. And I can’t imagine how hard it must be not to remember. I keep thinking, like, what I would do if I woke up and didn’t remember my friends or my family or— sorry.”

“Yeah. It’s been... Not fun. That’s for sure.”

“How *are* your memories? Anything coming back to you?”

“Some,” Shane answers truthfully. This is his friend, even if he can’t quite remember it. He should make the effort. “But not enough. Sometimes I don’t know if it’s really me remembering or just overhearing what people are saying and my brain, like, making shit up.”

“Hm,” Hayden hums thoughtfully. “Have you talked to Rose?”

Shane furrows his brow. There was a “Rose” in his phone, who he was pretty sure was an *actual* girl, flower name notwithstanding, but he hadn’t taken the time to reply because he didn’t want to have to explain the whole “I don’t remember you” thing.

The NHL had kept things pretty hush-hush. Rosanov seems to be the only one besides his immediate team members that he’s being benched because of his head, his *mind*, instead of a torn ACL like they’ve let the media believe.

He’s not even surprised, for some reason, that Rozanov didn’t tell anyone. The thought hadn’t even crossed his mind until his mom had asked about it. She seems to still have a genuine dislike for Rosanov and so Shane thinks they probably didn’t become friends over the past few years.

Shane is pulled back into the conversation. “Yeah. Rose Landry?”

“What? Rose– Like... The Actioneers Rose Landry?”

“Yeah, brother. You guys dated for a bit last year. Nothing serious, but you still seemed pretty close after. I wasn’t sure if she might have reached out.”

Shane dated a *girl*? Fuck. He’s so far in the closet it’s basically Narnia. And Lily’s messages spanned *years*. Was Rose a cover? Did she maybe *know*?

Shane makes a mental note to shoot her a text and offer an explanation and hopefully get some information in return.

“Okay. Thanks, man, I will.”

Hayden uses their hi-five-hand-shake-guy-thing to pull Shane forward and clasp his shoulder.

“I promise not to stop inviting you, okay? We got your back. No matter what.”

Shane swallows and nods a thank you to Hayden before finally making his exit. All his nerve endings feel so raw and exposed and his chest *aches*. He doesn’t pull away from the curb, the tears making his vision too blurry to drive safely.

His phone pings and he thinks it might be Hayden, but it’s Lily. Shane’s eyes sill over. How did he know? How did he know Shane needs him?

Lily: *Did you have a good night? Watch the game?*

Shane: *Yeah. Good game for Boston.*

Lily: *That Rozanov guy is very handsome*

Shane: *lol I’m sure he’d love to hear you say that*

Lily: *You do not think so?*

Shane: *I have eyes, don’t I?*

Lily: *yes you are right. Gay ones.*

Shane laughs at that, his tears long gone. He wipes his nose on his sweater.

Shane: *Yeah he’s pretty beautiful*

Lily: *.....*

Shane: *Sorry. Did that make you jealous? Im sure you’re beautiful too*

Lily: *Not jealous. I said first*

Shane bites his lip before sending, *I’m glad you texted me. I was having a bad night.*

Lily: *Why? Hate to see Boston win? You will get your turn*

Shane: *No!! They're definitely not touching that Cup next year. I just*

Shane pauses, before deleting and starting over.

Shane: *It's hard with the other guys*

Lily: *They are being bullies? I will come to Canada, next flight.*

Shane grins at that.

Shane: *Not bullies. And I wouldn't mind that at all. When do you think we can see each other?*

It was a topic Shane has attempted to navigate for weeks now. After he was given a clean bill of health, he has asked Lily if he would be interested in meeting up only to be shot down.

Not yet, Lily had responded. *When the time is right, we will find each other. We have always done.*

And so Shane hasn't harped on it, but he wished Lily would change his mind. Shane wants to see his face. Wants to know what his voice sounds like. There's so many questions he's been saving to ask in person; how did we meet, were you my first, why aren't we dating if we're so crazy about each other?

Lily: *Soon.*

Shane had a dream about Rozanov last night.

It's not surprising, considering how often he's had wet dreams about the man over the last few weeks, but this was different. It was very... domestic. They were watching TV on a couch Shane doesn't recognize and there's an open bottle of ginger ale and a half eaten sandwich, tuna?, on the coffee table in front of him.

Rozanov's beard was gone and he looked younger than now, but older than Shane remembers from before. Rozanov smiles and slings an arm around Shane's shoulders and dream-Shane melts into his side.

Shane wakes up without a hard dick but with an aching heart.

Shane: *I'll be in Boston this weekend*

Lily: *Oh really? for?*

Shane: *Apparently I'm friends with Rose Landry and apparently she's shooting a movie there and apparently i\I've been ghosting her so now apparently i ave to go to Boston to see her*

Shane: *have**

Lily: *ah the famous ex*

Shane: *Why did I date her? If im ya know*

Having been speaking with Lily for so long, Shane expects a sarcastic reply. He's shocked when he opens his texts to find Lily's reply.

Lily: *The feelings you have were very scary for you. Not so scary to be with a woman*

Shane: *did we...? During that time*

Lily: *No. You were very good boyfriend to Rose Landry. Was my loss*

Shane frowns. He wants to shake his former self. Here was this man— this wonderful, funny, caring man— and Shane was too consumed with his image to give him the love he deserved. Maybe Lily was out. Maybe he refused to be Shane's dirty secret.

How would he feel if Lily got a girlfriend tomorrow? He knows the man is bisexual. He deserves someone who he can love freely, openly. Who would do the same for him. Shane's stomach hurts.

No. No, he doesn't like the thought of that at all.

Shane: *Maybe we'll see each other while I'm there. Maybe i;; pass you on the street and not even know*

Shane: *Fuck. I'll**

Lily: *I said before we will find each other. u trust me?*

Shane doesn't even have to think.

Shane: *Yes.*

Rose is gorgeous. Shane can see why he'd been enamored with her in the first place. She kind of reminds Shane of his mom. Is that weird to say? Okay, but don't they say you marry someone who resembles your parent? Does that apply to gay people too?

Shane shakes the thoughts from his head like a dog clearing water from its ears.

“I know I can’t be mad at you,” Rose says, sitting across from Shane with her poke bowl, “Because it’s not like you *remembered* me. But what the hell, Shane Hollander? I’ve been worried!”

Shane smiles thinly. “I know, I know. I’m sorry, seriously. Also, have I told you before that I’m a huge fan of your movies?”

Rose rolls her eyes, but she’s smiling. “Flattery will get you everywhere.”

The small restaurant is a bustle of activity. They’ve already been recognized a few times and Shane is horrified when he notices people taking *pictures* of them! Eating! He’s going to be on the front page of some tabloid tomorrow shoving raw fish and kale into his mouth!

Rose doesn’t even seem phased by it. She waves and smiles kindly at gawking patrons until she leans over the table to whisper in Shane’s ear.

“That guy at the counter is pretty cute, isn’t he?”

Shane swallows, his body sagging in relief. “So you do know. Did I... come to you? Or was it obvious? Fuck, was I a bad lov—”

He trails off when a group gets too close. Rose patiently waits for them to pass before responding.

“I got it out of you. It wasn’t obvious, but I had my suspicions. And I’m sure you make a better round hole than square peg.”

Shane chokes on his unsweet tea. Holy shit. Well, that’s something new he learned about himself. Except, he already had a feeling on account of all his steamy Rozanov dreams ending with Shane on the bottom, so to speak.

“Jesus, Rose,” he laughs and wipes his mouth. “Warn a guy, would you? I’m basically a virgin. *Again*.”

Rose shrugs. “I can only tell the truth.”

“Did I ever... mention anyone? Was I seeing someone that you knew of?”

Rose frowns in thought. “You didn’t really talk about that stuff with me. Even though I *knew*, you were always so secretive about it. It made me wonder— I don’t know.”

“No, what?” Shane prompts. “What were you gonna say?”

Rose fiddles with her straw. “I thought, at one point... It might be another player.”

Shane’s neck jerks back. “What? Why would you think that?”

“Because,” Rose sighs in frustration. “We had a discussion about other people in the NHL being gay and you mentioned how important it was to keep it a secret. And, no offense, but you don’t really do anything *besides* hockey-affiliated things, so I inferred.”

“That I was fucking another player?” Shane hisses in a whisper.

“That you were in love and couldn’t even tell your friend about it because you didn’t want to blow up the other person’s spot,” Rose explains and Shane’s heart kicks up.

“In love?”

“Yeah. You should see your face when you look at your phone sometimes. You’ve got major heart eyes, my friend.”

Shane slumps in his chair, his mind a whirl of emotions. Lily. Could Lily be a player? On a different team? Is Lily afraid to tell him in case Shane... He doesn’t even know. The confliction must be all over his face because Rose throws down a few bills and stands.

“You need a drink. A strong one. Come on, let’s go to a bar.”

It’s not a bar so much as a club. Shane’s sense of déjà vu is explained by Rose.

“We’ve been here before,” she yells in his ear. “Years ago. You liked it.”

Shane nods and looks around. There are flashing lights that he should probably be worried about, considering his mental state, but he pushes through to the bar.

“Rum and diet coke, please,” he tells the bartender. Rose is at the other end of the bar with people she seems to recognize. She looks around for him and he waves her worry away.

I’m fine, he tries to tell her with his eyes. *Have fun. I’ll have this drink and go.*

The bartender passes him his drink and Shane offers his card for the tab.

“No way,” the guy laughs. “This is hockey town and you’re hockey royalty, man. Even if you’re not on our team.”

“Thanks. Well, at least you have Rozanov,” Shane awkwardly returns his debit card to his wallet. He never understood why *rich* people are the ones who get free shit, but that’s a concern for another day.

The bartender laughs. “Yeah. You’re royalty, but he’s a *God*.”

And then he’s pointing to a poster hung up next to their top shelf alcohol. It’s Roznov with the Stanley Cup, blurred out for obvious reason, in one hand and a bottle of expensive vodka in the other. Shane can’t look away from his face. This must have been from Boston’s first Cup win. Rozanov looks so *young*. Happy and carefree.

Shane’s eyes travel down to where *Brewsters*, the name of the bar, is written in red lipstick across Rozanov’s sternum. And then up to a tattoo he didn’t know the man had on his chest. Shane squints to see it better and then the breath is knocked out of him in shock.

Holy shit. Holy fucking shit.

He leaves his drink untouched. The bartender had long moved on to the rest of the busy crowd and so no one stops him. He tries to push his way through the crowd again, but his jumbled mind and the adrenaline pulsing under his skin leads him further into the club instead of outside.

He finally makes it through the crowd, only to stop dead in his tracks. Rozanov is right *there*. Not looking at him, but at a pair of hot, sexy girls who have perfectly manicured hands on his corded forearms.

Fury rages inside Shane. What the *fuck*? He just spend months in emotional turmoil because he couldn't reconcile his feelings for Lily with his feelings for Ilya... Fucking! Ilya, Lily. Jesus Christ. And here the asshole was, flirting with some randos while Shane is..

Shane is crying. He doesn't know when it started. Maybe when he first realized. How relieved he had been, for a split second, that Lily and Ilya were one and the same and maybe he *could* have both. But now, he feels his chest splitting open.

Impulsively, he rushes forward and knocks his shoulder into Ilya's side. He doesn't stop. Not when Ilya tries to call his name, not when he gets outside, not when he starts to book it down the street while wiping a hand over his eyes.

He doesn't stop until hands grab him and throw him into a side alley connecting two buildings. Shane glares at the angry, handsome face towering over him.

"What the fuck was that, Hollander? Why did you not stop when I called for you?"

"I know it's you, *Lily*."

Shane is rewarded with Ilya's eyes widening and his pretty, pouty lips parting in shock. Shane sneers at him.

"Yeah. All this time... Let go of me," Rozanov hesitates, but does as Shane asks. He should run, not that Ilya has let him go, but he doesn't.

"You are angry with me. Because I kept this from you."

"I'm angry because I've been thinking I've been dream-cheating on my not-boyfriend Lily with dream-Ilya and then I find out not-boyfriend Lily and dream-Ilya are actually the same *fucking* person and then I see that person practically glued to a girl in a club."

Ilya take a moment to process. "That was... So many English words I do not understand. Dream-Ilya, what is this? But I think... maybe you are jealous?"

"Fuck you," Shane spats and attempts to shove Ilya away so he can *leave*. He's not drunk. He could go back to Montreal tonight and lick his wounds in a city that isn't... *his*.

He doesn't get far.

"Sweetheart."

The word takes Shane somewhere else. To a different time. His dreams, he realizes, aren't dreams at all but his mind attempting to supply him with his lost memories. His cheeks *burn*. Had he really done all that? He's kind of slutty.

"You are so lucky you are so pretty because you are so *stupid*."

Shane glares, though his face probably isn't very intimidating, tear streaked and red.

"You—"

"Sh, sh," Ilya presses a finger to his lips. "You are so dumb because... I am in love with you, Hollander. It broke my fucking heart to see you... and then in the hospital. You did not remember me. You continued to not remember me, but you talked to Lily. I thought only way I could keep you. I thought I'm only one who would ever remember."

"Remember what?" Shane whispers against Ilya's finger.

"This."

And then Ilya is leaning down to press their mouths together and Shane *whimpers*. It feels so *right*, the slow slide of Ilya's tongue in his mouth. The scent of spicy cologne. He knows his taste, he knows this scent. For the first time in months, he's *home*.

They break apart and both of them are panting. Shane wants to lunge forward and kiss him some more, but realizes they're on a very public street with minimal cover. Ilya seems to realize the same.

"Come to mine. I will remind you."

They stumble through the door. Shane had immediately latched onto Ilya's neck when they got to the elevators and Ilya almost buckled with a moan. He fumbles with the keys one handed, always keeping the other on Shane's nape as if afraid he'll disappear if they lose that point of contact.

Ilya pushes Shane against the closed door and attacks his mouth. There's no other word for it. His teeth are unforgiving on Shane's bottom lip, in juxtaposition with the way he runs his tongue softly over it after to soothe the bite.

"Fuck, Hollander. I've missed this mouth. This *ass*."

He reaches down to squeeze and kneed Shane's ass under his pants. A finger teases his crease and his eyes nearly roll into his head. Fuck, he'll shoot any minute if they don't slow down.

"God, *stop*. *Stop*."

Ilya immediately pulls away with his face bunched in concern. “What is wrong? I was too rough?”

“No,” Shane giggles. Really *giggles*. “I’m just... I don’t remember...”

It suddenly dawns on Ilya and then the man is stalking towards him like he’s an apex predator and Shane is an unfortunate little lamb.

He touches Shane more gently this time, running a hand under Shane’s shirt and across his chest to pluck delicately at his nipple. Shane whines and Ilya chuckles darkly. His other hand sneaks back into Shane’s pants and through his crease.

“It is not your first time here,” he touches Shane’s hole and Shane jerks uncontrollably. He wants... He doesn’t know. “But your first time here,” he presses a kiss to Shane’s forehead in understanding of Shane’s lack of experience.

He purrs in his deep Russian voice, “How lucky I am to have you for the first time *twice*. ”

Shane groans and lets his head fall back against the wall as Ilya continues to explore his body. He feels drunk with lust, everything in his vision swimming except for Rozanov’s heated stare directed at him.

“Sweetheart. I will be so good to you.”

Shane whimpers when two fingers press into his mouth and stroke over his tongue. He feels spit drool from his open mouth and maybe he should find it gross, but his cock throbs in his jeans.

He’s panting when Ilya removes the fingers from his mouth and uses Shane’s own spit to wet his hole.

“Oh *fuck*, ” Shane whispers. “Please. Please, Ilya. Please.”

He’s a babble of nothingness right now. He doesn’t even know what he remembers from their previous time together, but his body seems to know. His hips press back against Ilya’s fingers until the tips breach his opening.

“Fuck, Hollander, you are gagging for it.”

“Off. Clothes off. *Please*. ”

Shane whimpers as Ilya removes his fingers from his needy hole in favor of pulling off both of their shirts and unbuckling their pants. Shane is no help, trembling like he is.

When Ilya finally pulls Shane’s pants off, his cock jerks in relief. Ilya is face-level with it and gives the weeping slit a tender kiss before licking the taste from the lips Shane had become obsessed with. Has *been* obsessed with.

“He missed me,” Ilya says with mock sadness and rolls Shane’s balls in his hand. “Look how heavy and tight these are, Hollander. You poor thing.”

Shane has to reach down to grab the base of his dick before he ends up embarrassing himself.

“Christ, Rozanov, you can’t just... *say* things like that.”

“Why not?” Ilya grins. “You love it. I know.”

He pats Shane’s hip and orders him to turn around. Shane complies because... well, he trusts Ilya. He trusts that, right now, Ilya knows his body even better than Shane does.

Shane braces himself against the wall. Is Ilya going to fuck him like this? Against the wall? It’s desperate and dirty and more than a little exciting. But Ilya doesn’t stand up. Instead, he gives Shane’s ass a playful smack and parts the globes with his hands.

“And you *love* this.”

Shane doesn’t know what to expect. Certainly not Ilya Rozanov’s *tongue* flicking over his hole before giving it a wet, sucking kiss. Shane didn’t even know people *did* this. It’s so... he pushes his ass back and Ilya chuckles, giving his right buttcheek another smack.

“Yes. I told you. You fucking love it, Hollander.”

And then he dives back in with full enthusiasm; biting, sucking, pushing the muscle past the ring of Shane’s opening until Shane is loose and soft and dripping.

“Okay,” Shane whimpers. “Okay, Ilya, *enough*. I need...”

“What?” Ilya insists. “Tell me.”

“You,” Shane sobs when Ilya dips a little further to graze his balls with his mouth. “*Fuck*. I need *you*.”

Ilya is up on his feet in a hurry and practically tossing Shane over his shoulder. The whiplash makes Shane dizzy for a moment before he’s being deposited on a couch that he remembers from his dream.

“You made me a tuna melt,” Shane says dumbly, with Ilya looming over him. The man’s cock is thick, red, and visibly pulsing.

“Yes,” Ilya responds before making space for himself between Shane’s legs and pushing Shane’s knees to his eyes.

“Woah.” Shane didn’t even know he was this flexible. Ilya gives him a cheeky grin.

“Open up for me, sweetheart.”

Following his prompting, Shane grabs himself under his knees and holds himself splayed for Ilya’s access. Ilya does... nothing. He looks down at Shane’s leaking cock and wet hole like a sinner might look at Heaven.

“Ilya,” Shane whispers.

It knocks Rozanov out of his trance and he’s pressing forward to take Shane’s lips in another tender, passionate kiss. Shane should maybe be a little put off that Ilya’s mouth was just... *there*, but he can’t find it in himself to care very much right now.

“This will be quick. Has been a long time.”

Shane’s cheeks burn. “I— yeah, I haven’t—“

“I know, Hollander. I meant long time for *me*. ”

Shane nearly cums at just the suggestion that Rozanov is so backed up that he won’t be able to stave off his release. That Shane’s ass will be too *good*, too tight, too hot to stop himself.

He holds himself open a little wider and Ilya moans. He reaches behind a cushion for a small bottle of lube and a roll of condoms. Shane’s face must be questioning because Ilya laughs.

“We have done this before. Is hard for us to keep our hands off each other. There is condoms everywhere. Easy access.”

Shane’s chest fills to bursting. Who was he with Ilya Rozanov? Who knew he could be so desperate for it?

He feels pretty desperate right now as Rozanov rolls a condom over his dick and pinches the air bubble. Shane licks his lips.

“You like this, Hollander?”

Ilya grips his cock to waggle it before using it to smack Shane’s own dick. When Shane releases a high pitched, punched out moan Ilya does it again. Precum sprays from Shane’s tip and dribbles over his stomach.

“You want this big cock?”

Shane licks his lips. He practically has heart eyes looking at the size difference between him and Rozanov. The thick, veiny cock that points at him threateningly.

“Yeah. Yeah, give it to me.”

Rozanov launches forward and notching the head of his cock against Shane’s twitching entrance.

“I’ll give you,” he mutters, biting Shane’s nipple as he presses inside. Shane gasps, his eyes nearly crossing. “I’ll fucking... Hollander... *goddamn*... I’ll...”

Shane kisses him and it quiets any remaining words Rozanov has. They gasp into each other’s open mouths when Ilya is finally fully seated inside him, pressing against nerve endings that light Shane on fire.

And when Ilya starts to move, Shane knows he's a goner. The man takes one of Shane's legs and pushes it to the side so he can get a better angle to *yes, right there!*

Ilya smirks at the look on Shane's face. "Yes. I know this hole very well. It belongs to me. I know all the places you like best."

Shane moans and whimpers and begs like the slutty he apparently is, but Rozanov seems to *love* it. His pace becomes fast, hard, knocking Shane's teeth together.

"Holy shit," Shane pants, feeling a tingling in his balls. "I think I'm gonna— holy *shit*, Ilya!"

He looks down and then jerks his head up as his untouched cock shoots cross his chest and hits his chin. He didn't know he could *do* that, but Rozanov just snarls and keeps fucking him through it.

His ass clenches from overstimulation and that seems to be Ilya's undoing.

"Shane," he moans, voice shaking. "Oh, *Shane*."

Shane keeps his eyes on Ilya's face. Kisses Ilya's open, slack mouth. The furrow between his brow. God. Was it always like this? Shane can't believe he could be so lucky.

Rozanov gently pulls out, ties the filled condom, and collapses onto Shane, who is grinning and sated and feeling so damn *good* and happy.

Ilya tucks his face into Shane's neck. His weight is a little crushing, but Shane can deal with it if it means they can stay this close. He wants to kiss him, though, and tries to nudge Ilya's face up, but Ilya resists.

He shakes his head against Shane's neck and with a pang of panic, Shane realizes he's *crying*.

"Hey," he says, running a hand down Ilya's back. The big Russian trembles over him. "Hey. What is it? What's wrong?"

Ilya says a lot, but in Russian and Shane desperately wishes he had made more of an effort in ten years to learn his mother language. He makes a note to himself to download that owl app but for now he can only listen to the Ilya's string of heartbreaking, shaky words said wetly against Shane's neck.

"I'm sorry, Rozy, I don't understand."

"I was so *scared*," Ilya switched back to English. "I... *Moy lyubimyy*, I thought I'd never have you again. And I had so many, what do you say, regrets?"

Shane's body tenses. "What.. kind of regrets?"

Ilya finally pulls away and balances himself on his arms to look down at Shane. His beautiful face, the face that Shane *loves*, that he's in *love* with, is splotchy and red and his eyes are still wet.

Shane reaches up to wipe a hand across Ilya's cheek to catch his tears and Ilya nuzzles into his palm.

"Maybe regret is not right word. I wished I had said more to you. That you knew more of how I feel and then your mind would not forget me so easily."

"Ilya—"

The man over him chuckles sadly. "Yes. I know. Does not work like that, but my heart..."

Ilya's shoulders shake and Shane winds his hands around his neck to pull him back down with soothing, cooing sounds.

"I'm sorry," he whispers. "I'm sorry I scared you."

"Stop with sorry," Ilya mumbles and Shane laughs because he *remembers*.

"But, I'm here now. We found each other just like you said we would. I think this proves that falling in love with you is inevitable in any lifetime, doesn't it?"

Ilya sucks in a breath and then releases it in a fast *whoosh*.

"We have never... before. We have never said—"

"Really?" Shane frowns. "Then I really was stupid. I'm crazy about you, I've *always* been crazy about you. I was an idiot not to tell you so."

Ilya peppers kisses all over Shane's face and neck until Shane is squirming from the attention.

"Yes," Ilya says between kisses. "You are so dumb and... me too. I love you too. *Moy lyubimyy, moy lyubimyy.*"

And then he pulls away again, staring at Shane's face seriously to gauge his reaction. "I want to tell. Everyone. I want other people to know. This... is too important. Too important to not be remembered. To not share. Da?"

Shane freezes and then his entire body lights up. He smiles and Ilya look like he might pass out from relief.

Shane will never be the Shane from before. He knows now what he has to lose because he's already lost it once and he refuses to give up the best thing that ever happened to him. *Again*.

"We'll tell my parents first. We'll need Yuna Hollander on our side if we want to... but *yes*. Yeah, Ilya, I think our love is too big to just keep between us."

Ilya looks nervous, suddenly. Shy. "Your parents. They do not like me."

"They don't *know* you," Shane corrects. "But you already won some points by staying with me in the hospital in Boston before they got there. So I think they'll come around. They just

want me to be happy and *you* make me happy.”

Ilya starts blubbering again. “I thought I would fucking *kill* Cliff Marlow. If I was not captain he would be dead for what he did to you.”

“Aw. So scary, my big Russian cry baby.”

Ilya frowns. “Is not very nice, Hollander. Emotions are normal and I have lot of them right now. I still can not believe... here you are in front of me again. Makes me...”

He trails off and Shane is grinning so hard he’s worried his face will split. In a fast motion, he flips Ilya to his back and straddles his waist. He laughs at the look of pure shock and hungry desire on his man’s face.

“Yeah, I’m right here. I’m not going anywhere, Rozanov. Let me remind you.”

End Notes

apologies for any mistakes in timeline! I read the book in 2023 and so I borrowed some from that and some from the show and then wrote this in a few hours lololol this just wouldnt get out of my head until i wrote it down!!

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