Taste Like Sweet Chamomile

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Taste Like Sweet Chamomile

by SaigeSxcks13 (Violetmadison56)

Summary

Shane Hollander is in love with his best friend, Ilya Rozanov. When he hears Ilya fucking some girl, he thinks nothing of it. Ilya is always fucking someone. That is, until he hears Ilya agree to go on a date with this girl.

Cue the flowers.

OR: Shane Hollander develops Hanahaki Disease.

Notes

This is dedicated to Eiden, who has never read a hanahaki fic in their life.

(Also I have never written smut before so please please please let me liveeeeee)

Follow me on twitter @N0NBINARYDRAC and thank you for reading!! If you enjoyed, leave a comment and a kudos okay thanks love you!!!

He's fucked. He's been fucked since he agreed to be Ilya's roommate at McGill. It felt logical at the time, rooming with his best friend instead of some random person. He definitely did *not* think about the fact that he is madly in love with Ilya Rozanov, and that Ilya Rozanov is a complete man whore.

He's reconsidering all of his life decisions that led him to this point while listening to Ilya, only a thin wall away, grunting and moaning while some blonde girl moaned and cried his name. He can hear it through his supposedly sound-cancelling earbuds, and he has absolutely never wanted to die more. He hears Ilya let out a final, long moan, and then feels the bed shift.

Against his better judgment, he pulls off his earbuds and closes his eyes. He hates falling asleep with earbuds in, always waking up the next morning, and having to find them somewhere in the sheets. He figured they were done… it should have been safe. Of course it wasn't.

"That was the most mind-blowing sex I have ever had. I think you are Eros on Earth."

Ilya laughed slightly.

"Eros? This is high praise from the Greek History major."

The girl giggled.

"Can we… See each other again? Maybe for dinner?"

Shane found himself scoffing from his bedroom. Obviously, that wasn't going to happen. Ilya never saw someone twice, unless it was Svetlana.

"I would like that. I will text you?"

Shane's whole body went rigid. He had been able to convince himself it was fine, if not a little annoying, to hear Ilya fucking people through the wall so long as they never came back. As long as Ilya never showed any interest after, he could convince himself that maybe he could have Ilya someday.

He felt like his throat was closing. He felt like he needed to throw up. He felt like he needed to hack up a lung.

He shot up, wracking coughs suddenly overtaking his chest. His eyes began to water, and he couldn't stop coughing. He was terrified that he was going to throw up. He felt pitiful attempting not to puke at the thought that Ilya was going to date someone. He felt something travelling up his throat and with one final, extremely painful, cough – a single white flower petal came out.

His chest heaved as he held the petal in his palm. He couldn't rip his eyes away from it.

He had heard of hanahaki disease, but had never met someone with it. This couldn't be real. It couldn't be happening to him. The slightly bloodied petal in his palm disagreed.

He was only snapped out of his daze when he heard the front door shut. Shane stood from his bed on shaking legs and quietly made his way to the hallway. Ilya's bedroom door was still slightly open, and Shane could see Ilya sitting up. He was facing the door, tapping away on his phone with a smirk on his face. Ilya must have heard him open his bedroom door.

"Are you okay? We heard you coughing up a lung."

We.

Shane gripped the petal in his fist. He wasn't sure he could respond without fully breaking down, so he simply nodded and stalked to the bathroom.

He threw the petal in the toilet, not wanting the evidence in the trash can, and brushed his teeth again to rid his mouth of the metallic blood taste.

When he left the bathroom, Ilya's door was closed. Shane stared at it for a moment, lost in his thoughts. He turned slowly and went back to his room, content to try and completely ignore the developing florals in his chest.

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Despite his attempts, it's surprisingly difficult to ignore coughing up multiple flower petals every day. He could be in the middle of a class and have to excuse himself to cough in the hallway. Thankfully, he's managed to convince Ilya that he's just getting sick.

Rose, however, was a bit harder to convince.

"You don't sound sick."

"Well I am."

"Sick how?"

"I don't know, a cold?"

"Are you asking or telling me you have a cold?"

Shane rolled his eyes and glared over his open laptop. She sat across from him, arms propped on the table, and her chin resting on her palms. Her blue eyes narrowed in a way that radiated concern, and Shane couldn't help the wave of guilt he felt. He didn't want to cut Rose out, but telling her about the petals made them a reality.
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“Rose, I promise I’m okay. Just a cold.”

Rose sighed, leaning back in her chair, grabbing her iced chai and taking a small sip.

“If you say so. How’s your project coming along?”

“It’s okay, my professor said my window placement was very nice at my last check-in.”

Rose chuckled a little.

“Being an architecture student is so funny. The window placement is nice?”

Shane laughed a bit and shut his laptop.

“Okay theatre major, what’s the premise of the musical you’re doing right now?”

“You know plots of musicals are always weird!”

The moment was over when a voice Shane had been trying to avoid cut through.

“Rose Landry! You already steal my dear Sveta from me, I cannot allow you to take Shane as well.”

Ilya sauntered up to the booth they had occupied at the coffee shop, sliding in next to Shane like it was nothing. His hip nudged at Shane’s, forcing him to scoot further into the booth. As much as Shane had been trying to avoid him, he was happy to see him. He was always happy to see Ilya. Rose rolled her eyes.

“I’m not *stealing* anyone from you, Rozanov. It’s not my fault Svetlana and Shane would much rather spend time with me. Just goes to show who’s better.” She teased and Ilya looked

offended, his jaw hanging open, a hand brought to his chest.

“No manners from Miss Landry!” He threw a hand in her direction and turned toward Shane. “Does not matter, I came to speak with you.”

Shane felt his cheeks heat up at the idea of Ilya seeking him out.

He's your best friend, of course he's going to seek you out.

Shane felt his chest tighten a little and he tried his best to stifle the cough rising in his throat.

“What’s up?” Shane managed to get it out without his voice sounding too scratchy.

“Troy and his frat are having a party tonight, will you come? Don’t immediately say no! The guys miss seeing you. You have been so busy with your stupid building project, no one has seen you.”

Shane hates parties. Ilya knows he hates parties. But Ilya is right, he hasn’t seen any of his friends in so long because this project has fully consumed him. Well… and the whole coughing up petals and wanting no one to find out. Maybe he could go for a few hours and just catch up.

“Okay, I’ll go.”

Ilya’s baby blue eyes lit up and a wide, goofy smile overtook his face. Shane couldn’t stifle the cough in his throat anymore and he leaned into his elbow, letting out a horrible, whole-body wracking cough. He felt a hand being placed on his shoulder and slowly sliding down to rub his back. It made the coughing worse.

Shane felt the petal making its way up his throat. He couldn’t let it escape his mouth, not in front of Rose and Ilya. When he felt the petal exit his throat and enter his mouth, he used his

tongue to tuck it into his cheek. He sucked in a deep breath and closed his eyes.

"Bathroom." He managed to choke out.

Ilya looked at him with concern wrought on his face, but scooted out of the booth. Shane immediately exited the booth and sprinted to the bathroom, pushing the door open and slamming it closed behind him. He spun the lock and flopped himself over onto the sink, gripping it tightly and spitting the petal into the basin.

It's bloodier than normal. The last few times he's coughed up petals, they had been mostly white with spots of bright red. This one, however, was completely covered in red.

Shane rinsed his mouth, wiped his eyes, and threw the blood-covered petal away.

He put out of his mind that it was getting any worse. He had friends to return to, and people worried about him. He needed to reassure them he was perfectly fine. He was perfectly fine.

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He had shown up at Troy's frat house at 10 pm on the dot, his house already booming with annoying music. The smell of shitty beer and weed permeated the air. He took a deep breath and pushed forward into the home.

It was immediately too loud, too many people crowding the shitty frat house. His eyes scanned the crowd, trying to find anyone he could cling to.

"Is that Shane fucking Hollander! Holy shit, I almost forgot who you were!" A voice that was incredibly loud, and belonged to one JJ Boiziau.

JJ quickly pulled him into a side hug, beer sloshing in his cup and almost hitting Shane in the chest.
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“How the fuck have you been? I never see you anymore!” JJ took a sip of his drink, a drunken smirk plastered across his face.

“I know, I know. I’ve been busy. This fucking architecture project is killing me.” JJ had grabbed him by the arm and begun pulling him toward the kitchen, obviously only half-listening to what Shane was saying.

“Yes, yes, studious Shane Hollander. You need a drink.” JJ decided to do so without asking Shane at all. Shane simply rolled his eyes and allowed himself to be pulled into the kitchen. Upon entry, he saw that the kitchen island was flooded with hard liquor and chasers. Normally, frat parties kept to shitty beer and only broke out the hard stuff when something important was happening.

“Is the frat celebrating something?” He found himself asking before he could think better of it. JJ was a brother and would definitely know what was happening.

“Cliff proposed to his girlfriend, I think. I’m not sure, I just know he said something about marriage and started bringing out the good shit.” He shrugged and turned to Shane. “Find a drink, Capitaine. Hey, Julie! Mon Amie, dance with me!”

JJ was gone again before Shane even blinked, already off dancing with some girl.

He found himself alone again, but surrounded by strangers and liquor. He poured himself a lukewarm barm, pointedly avoiding the bottle of tequila sitting next to it.

“Shaney! I honestly didn’t think you’d show up.” Rose was clearly more than a few drinks in, her cheeks flushed a blushy pink. Svetlana held Rose by her waist, heels now strapped to her feet instead of the white Converse she no doubt had shown up in.

Svetlana had discovered very early on in their relationship that Rose insisted on wearing heels to every party; yet the moment she got a bit too drunk, she had a habit of taking them

off. So, she had begun wearing comfortable shoes and switching with Rose instead of the smaller girl running around barefoot on sticky frat floors.

“Honestly, I wasn’t sure I was gonna show up either.” Shane laughs a bit at how she stumbles, trying to get closer to him and out of Svetlana’s arms.

“Hello, Shane. I see my girlfriend would like to transfer to your arms. Can I trust you with her while I go pee?” Svetlana cocked an eyebrow at him and gently pushed Rose toward him.

“Yeah, I’ve got her. Go ahead.” Svetlana pressed a gentle kiss to Rose’s forehead and mumbled something in her ear before walking away. Rose watched dreamily as her girlfriend left before spinning and fully leaning against Shane.

“She’s so dreamy, isn’t she?”

“I’m not sure I’m the right person to answer that.”

Rose sighed and looked Shane in the eyes.

“Yeah, probably not…Especially since you’re totally in love with Ilya.”

Shane choked on his own saliva and he could feel his blood rushing to his face. He’d never told Rose about his embarrassing crush on Ilya. Had he been too obvious? Who else knew? Did Ilya know? Is that why he was seeing that girl now? To let Shane know he wasn’t interested. He could feel a petal making its way up his throat. He started coughing before he could stop it.

“Shaneee I wanna dance. Let's goooo!” Rose weakly tugged at Shane’s wrist, not yet noticing anything was off with him.

He tried to stifle the cough as best as he could, leading her to the dance floor. His throat felt full, and it was getting hard to breathe, but he had to make sure Rose was safe before he could run to the bathroom.

Rose pulled them onto the dance floor, swaying and stumbling over her own feet to the sound of whatever music was playing. Shane couldn't hear it over the pounding in his ears.

Then he saw him.

Ilya, standing in the middle of the dancefloor, making out with some girl. Ilya looked gorgeous, perfectly in his element. The red and blue lights that were strobing illuminated his face and curls. The girl… was pretty, from what Shane could see. Blonde, skinny, short… nothing like him. It felt like time stopped, and he couldn't breathe at all. He choked out a breath and he felt the blood pooling down his chin. He forced his eyes away from Ilya right as a shuddering cough wracked his body and a whole, bloody flower came out of his mouth. He caught it in his hands, trying to stop the blood dripping down his chin.

He could feel the slick mix of saliva and blood mixing in his palms, the texture making him nauseated.

"Shane?" Rose had stopped dancing and was looking at him. He needed to get out of here.

"I'm sorry… I'm sorry, I have too…" He saw Svetlana walking toward the edge of the dance floor and waved her over. As soon as she got closer, he turned the other direction and ran. He ran as fast as his feet would take him, trying to swerve around the crowd through blurry eyes.

He found the bathroom, slamming and locking the door behind him.

Upon looking in the mirror, it wasn't as much blood as he was expecting. It felt like more on his face and hands than it actually was. His chin had a disgusting mix of saliva and blood thinly coating it, and his hands still held the whole flower he'd coughed up.

He threw it into the sink and turned the cold water on, cupping his hands and washing his face the best he could. When he wiped his face free from the water and blood, the flower sat in the sink mocking him.

He immediately recognized it.

Chamomile. The national flower of Russia.

"My mama used to grow them. She said it was the best thing about Russia, the flowers."

He couldn't pull his eyes away from the bloodied yellow center.

The tears he hadn't realized were falling dripped from his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. He spit into the sink, blood exiting his mouth and hitting one of the flower's white petals. Someone knocked on the bathroom door.

He took the petal from the sink basin and threw it into the trashcan, then he wiped his eyes and washed his hands to make sure he was rid of any extra blood. He needed to go home, to not be at the party anymore.

When he pulled the door open, Rose was standing with her arms crossed. She shoved him backwards into the bathroom again, locking the door behind her.

"What the fuck was that, Shane?"

He shrugs, trying to play dumb so he doesn't have to admit how fucking pitiful he is.

"I didn't feel good. I'm gonna head home, I think."

Rose cocks an eyebrow at him, her cheeks still flushed pink but obviously much more aware than she was 5 minutes ago.

“So we are gonna pretend? Act like you didn’t just spit up fucking *blood??*”

Her eyes bored into his brain as he tried to avoid eye contact with her.

“I’m fine, Rose. I told you, I just don’t feel good.”

Her eyes softened a bit and she reached out, cupping his cheeks.

“Shane. Talk to me, please. I’m worried.”

He shook his head slightly, feeling the tears begin to prick at his eyes again. His eyes slowly drift toward the trashcan where the disposed chamomile flower sits. Rose’s eyes follow and her mouth opens in a silent gasp.

“Shane…”

He shakes his head again, breaking free of her hands still bracketing his face. He lets out a humorless laugh and wipes his eyes again.

“It’s okay. It’s fine. I can’t do anything about it. I didn’t want you to know.”

Rose’s eyes are wide, and Shane can see the different emotions swirling in the blue irises. Sadness, pity, fear, a touch of anger.

“Oh Shaney…Is it…?” She didn’t have to say his name, they both knew. His laugh was tired and empty as he just nodded his head. He felt the tear marks streaming down his face now. It wasn’t a loud, sobbing type of cry. More so a cry of acceptance. Acceptance that he was going to die, acceptance that the man he loved would never love him back.

Rose tried to wipe the tears away, but they kept flowing down his face.

“Does he know?”

Shane’s eyes immediately shot to hers.

“No, and he never will. He’s… seeing a girl now I think. It’s okay. I should have known this would happen.”

Rose shook her head as he spoke.

“No, no. You do not blame yourself for developing this.” She danced around naming it. “Have you…thought about the surgery?”

“No. I wouldn’t be able to survive that. People who have gotten it almost always say they regret it. That they feel hollow inside. I would rather die remembering what love feels like than live not being able to feel anything.”

Rose thought for a moment, the alcohol in her system obviously still slowing down her thinking capacity. After a few seconds she nodded slowly.

“I…I understand that. I wouldn’t want to live like that, so I can’t ask you to. Are you sure you don’t want to at least try and talk to him?”

He nodded again.

“I don’t ever want him to know it was him. He’ll blame himself, even though he couldn’t have done anything. It would only clear out if he actually loved me, and he would try and lie to save me.”

Rose frowned at him, tears brimming in her eyes.

“Okay…Okay…Uhm. Are you…going to tell your family?”

“Honestly, Rose, I haven’t thought a lot about it. I just want to pretend nothing has changed. I want to keep going like everything is fine. I…I don’t want to admit I’m dying yet.”

The tears finally spilled out of Rose’s eyes, tracking down her face and ruining her beautiful eyeliner. She sniffled and nodded again, turning her face away from him before letting out a hiccuping sob. He immediately pulled her into a hug, clutching her small frame closer to his body.

“I’m sorry, Shane. I should be the one comforting you. Fucking alcohol.” She laughed slightly and he just held her tighter. He lay his head on top of hers, letting her cry into his bicep as she grappled with his death better than he had.

“Just…Don’t tell anyone, okay? Especially not Svetlana. I love her, but she’ll tell him.” Rose nodded against his chest. Her crying had calmed slightly and she pulled away from his embrace.

“I won’t say anything.” She paused for a moment, thinking her next words over carefully. “You can always talk to me, Shane. I hate to think that you would have just gone through this completely alone if I hadn’t seen you tonight.”

He felt the guilt wash over him. He knew he could trust Rose, of course he could. He just… didn’t want to put that burden on anyone.

“I think I’m gonna head home.”

Rose frowned before nodding and pulling back completely.

“Okay, do you want me to come with you?”

He shook his head and wiped his face one more time.

“No, you should stay. Hang out with Svetlana, have a good time. Just because I’m sulking doesn’t mean your night should be ruined.”

Rose looked hesitant, but nodded anyway. She cleaned her face up in the mirror before they both exited the bathroom, getting glares from the line of people who had been waiting. He gave a sheepish apology as he passed them. Rose walked him to the front door through the crowd of people.

“Text me when you get home?”

“Of course. Enjoy your night, okay? I’m serious about you not letting me ruin your night.”

Rose frowned at him and huffed.

“You aren’t ruining my night, Shane. I love you, okay? I’m always here for you, day or night. Drunk or sober. Do you understand me?”

He smiled at her and nodded. God, what the fuck would he do without her?

“I love you too, I’ll let you know when I’m home. You let me know too, okay?”

With that, he departed for his and Ilya’s place.

Later that night, Ilya returned home with someone and proceeded to plow them through the mattress.

And if Shane coughed up another flower, that was his business.

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From then on, Shane decided to spend as much time alone in his room as possible. He would go to class, grab lunch alone, and return to his and Ilya's apartment. His and Ilya's classes had never lined up (a fact he used to hate but now was extremely grateful for), so he managed to avoid the other man.

"Shane?"

Well, until he couldn't anymore.

"Shane, are you okay? I haven't really…seen you in a few days."

Shane took a minute before responding.

"I'm fine, Rozanov." He tried not to sound too pitiful. He wasn't sure it worked.

He could feel the tension through the white plywood door that separated them. Ilya was uncharacteristically silent, but Shane knew he hadn't left.

"Did I…do something wrong?" Ilya's voice was so quiet and sad that Shane felt his heart break. He wasn't mad at Ilya… he could never be mad at Ilya. Before he could think better of it, he was standing from his desk and pulling the door separating them open.

Ilya looked sad, a fear of whatever he had done wrong lingering behind his eyes. He still looked beautiful, and that thought alone had him almost coughing viciously.
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“You didn’t do anything wrong, Ilya. I’m sorry I’ve been distant, I just haven’t been feeling great recently.”

Ilya nodded slowly before locking eyes with him.

“What is wrong? You are sick?”

Shane couldn’t help the hollow laugh that ripped out of him.

“Yeah, you could say that.”

“What do you mean?”

Shane huffed and turned away from him, going to stalk further into his room when he felt Ilya’s hand grip his wrist.

“Shane…What do you mean?” Ilya’s voice was heavy and demanding but still laced with concern. He felt the flower coming up his throat. He wasn’t sure he could speak even if he knew what to say. He simply shook his head and tugged his hand from Ilya’s grip.

Ilya scoffed and ran a hand through his hair.

“Fine. Fine! You don’t want to talk to me, that is fine. Shun me all you want, stay holed up in your room. I don’t fucking care, Hollander. Fuck!” He spun around, slamming the door shut behind him. A few moments later, the front door also slammed. Shane felt himself flinch and cough unintentionally. He tried not to cry, tried to keep all of his emotions in check. He knew Ilya cared, but hearing him say he didn’t had somehow made things worse. He bent over and choked, gripping the side of his bed and falling to his knees. He heaved until the flower came out, but found himself still choking for air and a sensation still clogging his airways. He reached up and into his throat, tugging on what was causing the blockage. It forced him to heave, and tears had definitely begun to roll down his cheeks now. The pain was fucking

blinding, it felt like his throat was being ripped to shreds. He yanked again, trying to pull it loose as his vision slowly began to blacken around the edges. It barely budged. He could feel the panic and adrenaline coming over him.

Is this what dying is like?

He pulled hard one final time and was immediately flooded with fresh air into his lungs. He could taste and smell the blood around him, feel as globs rolled down his throat. His eyes slammed shut as he took deep breaths to inhale the air he had been lacking. When he cracked his eyes open again, he saw a long, blood-covered root.

He let himself continue sobbing, thinking about everything going wrong in his life. Ilya was going to hate him, and he was dying because of how much he loved him. How fucking ironic.

He pulled his phone out and called Rose.

“Hey, babe I can’t really talk–” She cut herself off at the sound of his pathetic sniffling. “Shane, what happened? Are you okay?” He laughed sadly through his choked sobs.

“It’s getting worse, Rose.” His throat was raw, and he barely managed to garble out the words. He spit blood onto the hardwood floor, figuring he could wipe it up later.

“Where are you, Shaney? Are you home?” He nodded before remembering that she couldn’t see him and he would have to verbalize his response. He distantly thinks he should have sent a text instead.

“Yes.”

“I’m coming over, okay? You can come stay with me for a bit.”

“Okay…I’m sorry.”

“Don’t you dare apologize, Shane. I’m on my way right now, okay? Love you!”

“Love…you.” The blood was starting to clot in his throat, and it was uncomfortable. He felt so tired suddenly. He closed his eyes and let the darkness take over, just for a little.

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“Shane? Are you okay?” He felt a warm presence near him, a hand gently resting on his cheek. He blinked his eyes a few times, not fully remembering falling asleep on his bedroom floor. Rose was kneeling next to him and cracked a small, sad smile at him when he opened his eyes.

“There you are. I wasn’t sure if you were planning to come back to me anytime soon. I don’t think I could carry you.” She joked quietly as he began to sit up. The root was still sitting on the floor, confirming that his nearly choking to death was not a horribly realistic nightmare.

As he sat up, he felt something lukewarm and syrupy stuck to his cheek and lips. He stuck his tongue out and realized it was blood. He looked down at the floor and saw the small spot of blood that must have pooled while he slept. His eyes drifted to Rose, who just looked at him sadly.

“Let's get you cleaned up, okay?” She stood up and held out her perfectly manicured hand. He let her help pull him. She went to get a warm paper towel, not wanting to ruin a washcloth, and helped wipe his face off and clean the blood off the floor.

“I don’t deserve you.” Rose stopped scrubbing and whipped her head around.

“Don’t start with that. Of course you do. I love you, Shaney. I would do anything for you, including cleaning up your blood from the floor. Don’t you dare say you don’t deserve me and my love, okay?”
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He nodded sheepishly, avoiding eye contact with her.

“I love you too.” He sat for a minute while she continued to silently wipe blood away. “Can I…still come stay with you for a bit?”

She smiled softly at him and cupped his cheek, stroking over his cheekbone with her thumb.

“Of course, babe. Pack a bag and let's get out of here.”

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Rose found herself sitting at the shitty cafe near campus, sipping an overpriced and frankly horrible chai latte. Shane hadn’t left her apartment in days, not even to attend classes. He was getting worse, with more flowers filling her trash cans now than actual trash. He’d had a few roots too, thankfully none as big as the first. He had discussed with her how terrifying the incident had been. How he couldn’t breathe and how it felt like he was dying. She had cried, even though she tried not to. She didn’t want him to have to comfort her when *he* was the one dying.

Svetlana knew Shane was staying with her, but nothing else. Rose had agreed not to tell anyone about what was going on with Shane, and she was going to keep that promise. Of course Sveta had asked questions, and she was sure that Ilya was also fielding questions through the other woman. She told the other woman that she couldn’t tell her what was going on because she had promised Shane.

Thank god Svetlana was a reasonable woman.

She flipped the page in the book she was skimming for her feminist literature class, trying to figure out what the fuck to do with the current predicament, when the chair across from her was pulled out with a horrible screech. Her head snapped up and made immediate eye contact with a rough-looking Ilya Rozanov.
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His hair was greasy, and under his eyes were almost black. She was pretty sure the black sweatshirt he was wearing belonged to Shane.

"Hello, Rozanov. Can I help you?" Admittedly, it probably came out bitchy. She knew it wasn't Ilya's fault that Shane was dying, but really, who else could she blame?

Ilya's dimmed eyes roamed over her before he sniffed and looked away.

"Is he okay?" His voice was fragile, nothing like she had ever heard before. She felt her guard go down just slightly, forcing herself to remember that Ilya did care about Shane. He was obviously concerned.

"No, but I'm not sitting here and talking with you about it. I promised him–"

"I know! I know you promised him, but please…please, Rose. He will not take my calls, and he ignores my texts. He does not go to classes. What is going on?" His voice wavered, and he swallowed before turning his head back toward her. "Please. I feel like I am dying without him."

The last comment made her scoff before she could stop herself. She shook her head and looked him dead in the eyes.

"You aren't dying, Rozanov. Leave Shane alone, okay? He's struggling enough without you making it worse. Go home and take a shower, you look…rough." She closed her book and slid out of the chair.

She was already half a block away before she remembered the shitty, half-drunk chai latte.

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Dear Mom and Dad,
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I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I know you would have wanted me to get the surgery, and I just couldn't. I tried really hard but…It doesn't matter anymore. I love you both. Thank you for supporting me with everything I've done, ever since I was a kid who sketched unrealistic buildings that reached the clouds. I love you. Keep going for me, okay?

Love,

Shane

Dear Rose,

Thank you for everything you did for me in these months. You are the best friend I could have ever asked for. I know you said I deserve you and your love, but I don't. I don't deserve the way you supported me and held me and cleaned up blood from your own apartment floors. Thank you for taking me under your wing freshman year. I don't know what I would have done without you. I love you forever, Rosey.

Love,

Shane

Dear Ilya,

I love you. I'm sorry, I tried not to. I tried so fucking hard not to love you. But Jesus, how could I not? I love that you smile with every tooth on display. I love that you know how to handle my stupid quirks. I love how beautiful and funny you are. Your eyes fucking hypnotize me. Even the gentlest brush of your hand sends shivers up my spine. God, I sound fucking crazy. I'm sorry I couldn't spend time with you during my last weeks. I wanted to, so fucking badly. I couldn't be around you without them coming out. I couldn't tell you, either. Seeing you try to lie about loving me would have killed me in front of you, and I couldn't do that. Don't blame yourself, okay? I never blamed you for this. I only have myself to blame for letting my stupid heart fall. I love you, Ilya Rozanov. Don't forget me, okay? I'm still your best friend, asshole.

Love,

Shane.

Shane finished writing the letters for the people he cared most about. He knew it seemed odd to write letters, but it felt more personal than simply writing a text message or typing something out.

He knew he was going to die any day now. The roots and flowers had been worse, he could feel the way they curled around his lungs and constricted. It was harder to breathe than it had ever been. Rose would often sit and comfort him while he choked huge stems and roots from his throat, making sure his airway was cleared.

He owed her so much more than he could ever give.

He finished folding and labeling the notes, setting them on her coffee table, when he heard a knock on the front door. Rose wasn't home, and she definitely didn't forget her keys since she was the designated driver for the night. He weakly stood and shuffled over to the door. He knew he'd lost weight; not being able to work out or choke down much food would do that. He was pale from lack of sun, since he had stopped attending classes almost 2 weeks ago.

He didn't bother checking the peephole before unlocking and pulling the door open. Ilya was standing in the doorway, looking down at his feet.

"Shane–" He stopped immediately when he looked up from his feet. "Боже! Shane what the fuck?!" Shane felt the other man's eyes roam over his body, fear and horror crossing before ending on worry.

Shane shuffled his feet and pulled his eyes away from the other man, trying to keep down the bile and flower debris.

"What do you want, Ilya?" Ilya's jaw hung open as his eyes roamed again.

"What do I want? Shane, I haven't seen or heard from you in almost a fucking month. I ask Rose what is wrong and she will not tell me. So finally, I say fuck it and come check on you

myself only for you to look like a zombie!" Ilya took a step forward into the apartment, reaching his hand out toward his shoulder. Shane found himself flinching like he had been shot. The hurt in Ilya's eyes nearly killed him on sight. "Shane…please, talk to me. I'm so worried I can hardly sleep. I just want to know what is wrong."

Shane turned his head away, feeling the tears filling his eyes. He couldn't cry. He needed Ilya out of the apartment.

"I can't fucking tell you." His throat was raw, causing his voice to come out gravelly. A tear finally fell, rolling down his cheek.

He wasn't looking at Ilya. He should have been.

Ilya's hand cupped his cheek and brushed the tear away.

Shane couldn't keep it inside anymore.

He choked, his lungs constricting worse than normal. He felt the cough and felt the blood already traveling up his throat. He collapsed to the ground, trying to breathe as tears and blood rolled down his face. He could feel the stem and root worming up his throat, a whole flower pushing out of his mouth and finally completely closing his airway.

What a crazy view Ilya probably had. Tears running down Shane's cheeks, blood pooling and dripping down his lips and chin. A whole chamomile flower forcing its way through his lips and causing him to claw at his throat. The horrible clicking noise as he choked.

"Shane! Fuck! Shane, what the fuck?!"

He vaguely registered that Ilya had fallen to his knees, and that he was petting Shane's hair. His vision was blackening, and he felt weak.

“No! No, Shane open your eyes! Pleasepleaseplease open your eyes! Ебать! Please don’t go, please I fucking love you! I love you, please don’t leave me. Я тебя люблю…Я тебя люблю.”

Shane’s vision went black.

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The continuous beeping of a monitor was the first thing that Shane noticed. The second was that the lights were so bright he could see them behind his eyelids. The third was that he was breathing. He didn’t feel any roots or flowers in his lungs, though his throat did still feel raw. He heard something shift in the room and forced himself to finally peel his heavy eyelids open.

It was a hospital room, obviously, and Ilya was sitting on a plastic chair next to his bed. His leg was bouncing, and he had his head down, running a hand through his curls.

“Ilya?” His throat hurt so badly, he could barely get the one word out.

Ilya’s head whipped up, eyes wide and puffy. He had tearstains down his cheeks and his face was fully flushed.

“Shh, rest now, котёнок. You’re okay. Do you want some water?”

He nodded, his eyes tracking Ilya as the other man stood up and rushed to a cup sitting on the counter. He raised his hand to take the cup, but Ilya simply pushed it away before raising the cup to Shane’s lips. He drank greedily, feeling like he’d never had a drop of water before in his life. Ilya watched him, his eyes never leaving Shane’s face.

“You scared me.”
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“I’m sorry.”

“No, no…is okay.”

He pulled the cup away and placed it to the side before returning to his chair.

“Why didn’t you tell me, Shane?”

He didn’t answer right away.

A knock sounded through the room, and a short woman with bobbed brown hair entered.

“Ah, good morning Mr. Hollander. How are you feeling?”

He blinked at her for a minute before realizing he should probably respond.

“My throat hurts.”

She nodded and looked down at the clipboard in her hands.

“Yes, that is to be expected. Your condition was advanced when we went to remove the dead roots, and your throat was a mess. You should expect your throat to be raw for a week or so, but overall your recovery will be easy. Just take it easy for a few weeks, no strenuous activity to let your lungs recover.”

He found himself nodding slowly, although nothing made sense. Dead roots? Roots didn’t die with hanahaki unless your love was requited, but that couldn’t be the case. It didn’t make any sense, Ilya was seeing so many people. He never made a move on Shane, so how could it be

mutual? He looked over at Ilya as the doctor said something he wasn't listening to before taking her leave.

"Ilya…"

"Why didn't you say anything, Shane?"

Shane hesitated, swallowing harder than normal.

"I…I couldn't. I couldn't stand to watch you lie about loving me. I think it would have killed me instantly."

Ilya let out a horrible little whimper, and Shane forced his eyes to look over at the other man. The other man's eyes were watering, and his mouth was gaping like he'd heard something he couldn't believe. He stood from the chair and came closer, cupping Shane's face so gently it made him want to cry. His eyes slipped closed and he felt himself melt into the comfort.

"Shanya, look at me please."

He shook his head slightly.

"Please." Ilya's tone was so horribly sad, and the guilt Shane felt was going to eat him alive. He cracked his eyes and looked at the other man in all his beauty.

"Shane, I love you. I have loved you since we were 13 and stupid teenagers. I loved you at 16 when you got your first boyfriend. I was so fucking happy when we both got into McGill and we could be roommates. I fucked other people– no, listen– I fucked other people because I thought I could never have you. I couldn't ruin our friendship by confessing, but now I know how much of a fucking idiot I was, and I am so, so sorry, Shane. I will never forgive myself for letting you almost die because of my stupidity."

Shane couldn’t help but shake his head and reach up to grab at Ilya’s face.

“No, no. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you. I never thought you could love me back. Don’t blame yourself, please. This is all my fault.”

Ilya sobbed and collapsed forward, resting his forehead against Shane’s.

“Ilya, I love you so fucking much.”

“I love you more than fucking life, Shane. Can I please kiss you now?”

“Please do.”

Ilya surged forward, pressing their lips together in a gentle kiss. Ilya moved to cup his jaw and deepen the kiss, licking over his lips to ask for permission. Shane couldn’t help the slight moan that came out as he parted his lips to allow Ilya in. His tongue roamed and explored all of Shane’s mouth, licking over his teeth and claiming every bit of space he could.

When he finally pulled away, Shane was much more out of breath than he normally would be.

“I’m sorry, моя любовь, you have to recover. No strenuous activity, yes?”

Shane felt himself flush.

They still had plenty to talk about, of course, but right now everything felt okay.

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“Ilya Rozanov.”

“...Yes, моя любовь?”

“Why does it look like a tornado went through our apartment?”

Shane had pushed the door open, thankful to return home after his few days in the hospital. Except his home was a huge fucking mess. Clothes everywhere, some his own and some Ilya’s. An empty bottle of vodka was lying on the couch with a single Chinese takeout box on the coffee table. Dishes were stacked in the sink, and it honestly looked like Ilya hadn’t tried to clean at all.

“Ah, yes. I was…not good while you were gone. I was so worried and I thought you hated me. Very dark time, but I will clean it do not worry.”

The guilt sang through his body again, like it had many times in the past few days.

“I’m so–”

“Do not finish that. Is okay. We have talked about it. Both of us were very stupid and irresponsible.”

They spent the rest of the day cleaning, together, and dragging Ilya’s bed into Shane’s room. (*“I’m not sleeping in the room where you fucked a bunch of people, Ilya.”*).

That night, laying together for the first time, they said nothing for a long while. They had discussed that, yes they were together, and yes they would take things slow.

But you could really only take things so slow when you had been pining forever.

It started with Ilya placing lazy kisses on Shane's clothed shoulder. Shane found himself smiling and curling back into the other man further. He'd always loved being the littlespoon. Ilya slowly kissed his way from his shoulder and up his neck, leaving kisses that lingered longer than strictly necessary. Shane couldn't help it when his hips rolled back against Ilya's, really he couldn't.

Ilya groaned in his ear, a breathy whine following after. Shane could feel his cock growing in his pants, and it simply made him grind his ass against the other man harder.

"Shanya, please."

Shane giggled.

"Please? I don't think I've ever heard you beg, Rozanov." He flipped in Ilya's arms so he could look at the other man, and Jesus was he a beautiful sight. His eyes were blown wide and his mouth was hanging open in a quiet pant. He looked absolutely devastating and they had barely done anything at all. "Awe, Puppy. So eager for me, hm?"

Ily whined again and his hips gave an involuntary thrust forward. Shane ran his fingers through Ilya's curls, petting him. He could have sworn Ilya purred, but he would keep that to himself. Shane moved to straddle Ilya, grinding their cocks together in a slow movement as he did so. Shane leaned closer to Ilya's lust drunk face and whispered to him.

"What do you need, baby?" Ilya tried to thrust again, but Shane held him down with his thighs and Ilya groaned.

"You, only you, Shane. Please, please let me fuck you. Please I'll be so good." Shane hummed as he ran a hand through Ilya's hair again and landed at the nape of his neck. He yanked Ilya's head back, causing a moan to tumble from the other man's mouth. Shane leaned forward and licked a long strip up Ilya's throat before mouthing at his jaw.

"You could have had this years ago, puppy. Why do you deserve it now?" Ilya whined again, trying to roll his hips to get any friction. Shane gripped his head harder.

“Did I say you could move?” Ilya shook his head, pitiful and beautiful.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’ll be good I promise. I’ll be so good for you, please.”

Shane leaned back on Ilya’s thighs, resting his hands on Ilya’s calves for balance. He observed Ilya’s desperate face, wondering what he should do next. Shane had never really been particularly dominant in the bedroom, but something about Ilya’s begging just brought it out of him.

“You wanna be good, pup?” Ilya nodded eagerly. “Okay, Okay baby. I’ll let you suck me, okay? Do you want that?” Ilya nodded again and Shane was sure his head was gonna fall off his shoulders.

He rolled off Ilya and onto his back, letting his legs fall open. He was still wearing sweatpants and boxers, but the tent in his pants was fairly obvious. Ilya looked at his hard cock and then back to Shane’s face, like he was unsure of what to do.

Shane grabbed his face and pulled him into a brutal kiss. Tongues laving and split slipping between lips, it was down right messy. They both moaned into each others mouths, and Ilya’s hips thrust forward again, hitting Shane’s thigh. He pulled away with a louder moan, face red with embarassment.

“I–I’m sorry, I don’t…” Shane shushed him, still holding his face and pressed another kiss to his lips before pulling away.

“That’s okay, baby. My pretty mutt just wants to hump, hm? You need something between your legs?” Ilya nodded, cockdrunk and filled with lust. “Take my pants off, be a good boy and suck me okay? Maybe you can have a treat if you do good.”

Before Shane had even finished speaking, Ilya had thrown himself down the bed. He ripped Shane’s pants and boxers off and watched as his erection sprung out. Shane groaned at the sight of Ilya staring at his cock, almost looking intimidated. “It’s okay, puppy. I know you can handle it, hm?” Ilya’s eyes were glazed over as he glanced up at Shane. He leaned

forward and licked up Shane's cock, tonguing at the tip and tasting the salty precum that was leaking out.

Shane moaned, unable to take his eyes off Ilya as the other man began to take him in his mouth. Ilya swallowed him down with ease, despite the fact Shane was not a small man, and showed him how much he loved him with his tongue.

Ilya looked so goddamn hot sucking his cock, eyes watering and saliva dripping out of the corners of his mouth. Shane reached down and strung his fingers through Ilya's curls, tugging slightly to pull him off. Ilya whined at the loss, teary eyes looking up at Shane.

"I know baby, I know. You look perfect with my cock in your mouth. You were doing so good I wanted to give you your treat." Shane shuffled slightly, moving so his thigh was right between Ilya's legs. Ilya immediately ground down on it, throwing his head back in a moan.

"Thankyouthankyouthankyou!" He exclaimed as he rode Shane's thigh, his hips moving back and forth to chase any friction he could. Shane chuckled at how cute he was when he was excited.

"You're such a good boy for me, hm pup? Are you gonna come on my leg? You're so easy for me. Such a good slut, getting off on just my leg. I haven't even touched your dick and you're so close already."

Ilya whined and moved faster, pressing his covered cock against Shane's leg even harder.

"Please! Please touch me. I need you to touch me! Please, Shane, Pleaseeee!" Shane chuckled and grabbed Ilya's hips, stilling their movement. Ilya whined and tried to keep moving, but Shane's grip was too tight.

"We gotta get you out of these clothes if you want me to touch you." Ilya's eyes widened and he nodded as he moved to take his pants and boxers off. Shane released his hips and allowed him to do so, watching as Ilya stripped completely naked.

They had seen each other naked before, in locker rooms or while changing at sleepovers, but this was a whole new context. Shane was *allowed* to look. Ilya *wanted him* to look.

I need this man to fuck me immediately.

Ilya threw his clothes to the side and looked down at Shane.

“Do you wanna fuck me, puppy?”

Shane could practically see his tail wagging. He imagined, for just a moment, what Ilya’s tail would look like. Blonde, obviously, curly like a goldendoodle. Cute.

“Lube in the top drawer, grab it for me.” Ilya moved quickly, going for the top drawer of the side table next to the bed. He fumbled for it before coming back with a condom and lube. Shane’s eyebrow quirked up at him.

“I don’t remember saying a condom. Are you clean?”

And if Ilya’s eyes could go wider, they would have. His pupil was fully blown, Shane couldn’t even see his beautiful blue anymore.

“Yes, yes. I just got tested a few weeks ago and have not slept with anyone since.”

Shane smiled and plucked the condom from his fingers.

“Then we don’t need this, hm? You belong to me, baby. I wanna feel all of you, every inch. I want you to fill me up and claim space inside me.”

Ilya's dick twiched and he moaned quietly, nodding looking over Shane's body again. Shane pulled his legs back, revealing his hole and giving Ilya better access.

"Get me nice and ready for you, pup."

Ilya slicked his fingers up, taking some time to warm up the lube, before gently probing at his hole. He pushed in delicately, like he was scared to hurt him.

"Go on, baby, you can do the whole thing. Don't be scared." Ilya nodded and slipped the whole finger inside, moving slowly to pull it in and out. He hooked it slightly to catch on Shane's rim before pulling out and pushing back in with two fingers. Shane moaned out at the welcome intrusion, turning his head to the side as Ilya fingered him open. "You're doing so good, puppy."

Before he knew it Ilya was up to three fingers and Shane felt ready. He wanted it to burn a little, the stretch was always one of the best parts.

"Come here real quick." He motioned with a finger for Ilya to come closer, which he did carefully. Shane placed a quick few kisses to his lips before pulling back again.

"I love you, Ilya."

"I love you so much, Shane."

Shane nodded and smiled at him, reaching down to grab at the other man's dick. He hiked his legs up to rest on Ilya's hips and notched Ilya's tip against his hole. Ilya's breath caught and he locked eyes with Shane. Shane nodded, and Ilya slowly began to slide his cock inside.

It was the most amazing feeling Shane had ever experienced. The stretch, the burn, the fact he could feel every vein in Ilya's cock. He wanted to live forever with Ilya inside him. Ilya panted heavily as his hips became flush with Shane's ass, stilling to let Shane adjust.

Shane clenched around him, just to tease, and ran his hands through Ilya's hair. Ilya moaned, shaking as he tried to hold himself up and not thrust into the man. Shane leaned forward and caught his earlobe between his teeth, biting gently before pulling back.

"You can move now."

Ilya immediately pulled out to his tip and thrust back in. Shane felt like his guts were being rearranged in the absolute best way. Ilya's thrusts became faster and faster, when he finally managed to nail Shane's prostate.

"Oh Jesus fucking Christ!" Shane threw his head back, eyes rolling into his skull. "Right there, Ilya, fuck!" Ilya drew back and nailed it again and again, making Shane scream out with pleasure.

"Shane…I don't know…fuck…I don't think I…" Shane nodded as Ilya spoke in a shaky tone, obviously close. He wrapped his legs around Ilya even tighter, trapping him in.

"Let go, baby, it's okay. You can come."

Ilya thrust a few more times before spilling into Shane's hole, pumping him full of his cum. Shane squealed at the sensation of Ilya's hot seed filling him up, and it was enough to send him over the edge as well. Ropes of cum shot shot out of his dick and onto his and Ilya's chest. Ilya thrust a few more times before collapsing forward onto Shane, his face buried in his neck.

"Я тебя люблю…Я тебя люблю…Я тебя люблю…" He mumbled against the mans skin. Shane wrapped his arms around his back, stroking up and down his spine softly.

"You did so good, baby. Made me feel so good. Such a good boy." Ilya whimpered and placed a kiss to neck.

They laid like that for a while, Ilya's soft cock still inside Shane as they both came down from their highs.

"Ilya…"

"Hmm?"

"It's time to clean up, baby."

Ilya tightened his grip around Shane's midsection.

"No."

"No?"

"No."

Shane laughed slightly at his spoiled boy.

"It's starting to feel gross, Ilya. It's time to clean up, okay? Do you wanna help me clean myself?"

Ilya grumbled and looked up to make eye contact. He nodded shyly, still in a slightly submissive mindset. Shane hoped that giving him a task to help would bring him back a bit. Ilya sat up slowly, pulling out even slower. Shane groaned at the uncomfortable feeling of emptiness, and then at the uncomfortable feeling of cum dripping out of him. Ilya reached down slowly, using one finger to push what he could back inside. Shane gasped slightly, tensing at the sudden intrusion and then moaning when he realized what Ilya had done.

Ilya rolled off the bed, offering a hand to Shane. He pulled the other man up and together they walked to the bathroom. Ilya was starting to come back, Shane could tell the glaze in his

eyes was lessening.

They showered together, Ilya scrubbing Shane's body and Shane washing Ilya's hair. When they got out, Ilya went to get water for them while Shane changed the sheets.

Ilya lay flat on his back while Shane curled around his side, one arm flung over Ilya's midsection. Ilya's hand skated up and down Shane's back in a comfortable embrace.

"I love you more than anything." Shane mumbled as he started to doze a bit.

"Yes, I know. More than life, apparently."

Shane couldn't help the slight snort that came out of him. It was probably too soon to be joking about the whole…almost dying thing…but that's just who they were.

Ilya kissed his forehead gently.

"I love you too, котёнок. Get some sleep. I'll be right here in the morning."

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