Question and Answer

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/8860846.

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences  
Archive Warning: No Archive Warnings Apply  
Category: M/M  
Fandom: Yuri!!! on Ice (Anime)  
Relationship: Katsuki Yuuri/Victor Nikiforov, Katsuki Yuuri & Victor Nikiforov  
Character: Victor Nikiforov, Yuri Plisetsky, Katsuki Yuuri, Christophe Giacometti, Makkachin (Yuri!!! on Ice)  
Additional Tags: Fluff, i guess, the banquet, in case y'all were looking for a banquet fic, takes place after last year's GPF, angry Yurio, poledancing, but you knew that already, Canon Compliant, drunk!Yuuri, pining!victor, Victor falls head-over-heels for a drunk messy Yuuri and it's beautiful, Victor POV, Yurio POV  
Series: Part 1 of Even Ice Gods Can Melt  
Stats: Published: 2016-12-15 Words: 10727

Question and Answer

by chellethewriter

Summary

Viktor is growing old, and his competitors seem to be growing younger and younger. Thus, with every passing year, Viktor finds fewer familiar faces at his Grand Prix banquets, and he wonders whether his attendance has become pointless. What he doesn’t realize, however, is that one unfamiliar, alcohol-reddened face can make the whole night more than worthwhile. (A canon-compliant retelling of the banquet in which Viktor falls head-over-heels for a certain drunk, Japanese figure skater, and Yuri Plisetsky is both displeased and incredulous).

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

With the exception of when he skates, Yuri Plisetsky spends the majority of his time with a hood over his head, using his sweatshirt to cast intimidating shadows over his eyes. He enjoys closing himself off like that. Certainly, he doesn’t want people to get the wrong idea about him. What they can assume from his behavior is true -- Yuri completely, totally, absolutely doesn’t want to be anyone’s friend, and he really doesn’t want to be talked to.

If given a choice, he would avoid everyone. That’s right. Everyone.

So when he is forced to not only attend a party filled with people, but also wear a suit which fails to
hide his eyes or obscure him in any way... well, suffice to say that he is not happy. Suits are stiff and boring and uncomfortable -- which is why only stuffy, stupid people wear them. Yuri hates becoming one of those people, even if it’s only for one night. He hates suits. He hates people.

In fact, he wears suits so infrequently that he never bothered to learn how to tie a tie. And no, he’s not embarrassed by that fact. Frankly, he’s been too busy destroying his competition to learn dumb skills like that. He’s above tying ties. It’s that simple.

But when he arrives in the hotel lobby with the damn thing hanging limply around his neck, Yakov proceeds to nearly burst a vein, screaming at Yuri about the importance of appearances, of etiquette, of representing Russia, etc, etc, blah blah. Thus, he promptly sends Yuri back upstairs to not only tie it properly, but also tuck in his “damn shirt.”

Yuri reluctantly obliges, but not without his fair share of angry mutterings, hissed under his breath. Honestly, would anyone care if Yuri left his shirt untucked or tie untied? Why can’t he just be left the fuck alone?

“And get Vitya while you’re at it!” is Yakov’s final order to him, screamed as Yuri approaches the elevators.

He sticks his tongue out at him -- the gesture is childish, Yuri admits, but still satisfyingly rebellious. He can also admit that Viktor would actually know how to tie the damn thing around his neck, so it’s not actually a bad idea.

A few minutes later, Yuri is standing outside Viktor Nikiforov’s hotel room, banging furiously on the wooden door.

“Oi! Viktor! You in there?”

There’s shuffling in the room, the sound of barking, and a voice shushing that barking. Finally, the door opens swiftly, revealing Viktor Nikiforov in a boring gray suit that looks like every other boring gray suit in the whole world. It’s almost startling to see someone like Viktor, who sports the world’s flashiest costumes on the ice, in something so commonplace.

“What do you think, Yura?”

The older man is smiling down at Yuri, a swoop of silver hair concealing his left eye. But there is something sardonic about the expression -- an amused sort of challenge, like Viktor is irritated by the interruption and is now sarcastically asking him: how can I be of service?

Yuri bites down his annoyance in turn.

As he does so, he notices a glass of wine clutched between Viktor’s fingers, close to empty but with a rim of residue farther above. Yuri glances further inside the room, past Viktor. There’s a bottle of the culprit drink on the coffee table, tipped over without so much as a drop pouring from its spout. Haphazardly twisted around the bottle’s throat is a gold medal, gleaming brightly against the glass surface.

As Yuri glances back toward remaining wine in the glass, Viktor downs the rest of the drink. Empty.

Yuri decides against commenting on it for now. “You’re late,” is what he says, with the pointed addition of, “and Yakov’s pissed.”

“He knows I’ll show up. I always do,” Viktor replies before turning away, sliding back to the couch where his poodle is casually lounging. Yuri still can’t believe that Yakov let him bring that mutt with
them to the Grand Prix Final in Sochi. He also can’t believe Viktor would ask to do something like that, considering that he had never made such a request before.

But then again, Yuri supposes that a four-time -- no, five -time gold medalist like Viktor Nikiforov can get away with whatever he wants.

Not that Viktor ever does much, judging by what Yuri sees during their years sharing a rink. He spends most of his time on the ice, practicing and planning routines and just...well… being Viktor Nikiforov.

Of course, Yuri always hears the stupid rumors around the rink, talking about who Viktor is dating or doing or screwing now. He’s a popular figure. And according to what some of his rinkmates say, he’s supposed to be attractive. Yuri personally doesn’t see it... but he knows that Viktor has sprinted through a lengthy roster of lovers. Not that those flings ever lasted.

Yuri remembers one time when Viktor had been on the ice, lost in the thought process of choreography. His phone (obnoxiously) beeped a notification from the bleachers, and in response, Viktor asked Yuri to bring it to him. Yuri isn’t one to do favors often, but that time, he was in no mood to argue with the request.

Before he relinquished the device to Viktor, Yuri got a glance at the text on the screen. The older skater was involved with a Polish ice dancer at the time, and evidently, she had messaged him the words, “Love u, Viktor <3”

Yuri watched as Viktor glanced over the declaration with indifference, and then proceeded to mute the phone and place it on the side of the rink without so much as a response. It was then that Yuri learned that Viktor always caters to the ice above all else -- his one true love.

It’s one of the few things about him that Yuri finds admirable.

That, and of course, his accompanying skating skills. But everything else, like on everyone else, is annoying as fuck.

Viktor proceeds to sit beside his poodle, replacing the wineglass in his hand with a cell phone. The pictures he takes showcase both his outfit and his dog. When Viktor kisses the pooch on the nose in one photo, Yuri resists the urge to gag and fails miserably. Dog people. He’ll never understand them.

“How much of that stuff have you had, you stupid drunk?” Yuri blusters. “The banquet starts in twenty minutes, and you’re sitting here, making out with your dog!”

“Hush, Yuri. I’ll be ready to go in a minute,” Viktor says calmly between selfies, winking brightly at the camera. “It’s going to be a long night. The wine will make it shorter from the start, hopefully.”

“There’ll be champagne there, I thought. Or are you that determined to puke all over yourself?”

“This is -- What? -- My hundredth banquet?” Viktor asks rhetorically, leaning his head against Makkachin’s fur. “I know what to expect. And I happen to know that the wine will make it easier. Wine makes everything easier, I find.”

The joke seems forced.

Yuri scrutinizes him. “But you won!”

Raising an eyebrow, Viktor challenges, “So?”
“So? Going to the banquet is the best part, then! You can rub it in their faces!”

Viktor gives Makkachin a look that clearly says, *Can you believe this child?* before proceeding to sigh and stretch his arms along the back of the sofa. “Yura, every banquet is the same. I mingle, I smile my way through forced compliments and congratulations. I get to see the bitter resentment in everyone’s eyes because they know I’ll be back next year, ruining their chances again. People respect me, maybe, but nobody likes me. Not really. For me, the banquet is tired. It’s old.”

Yuri snorts. “And so are you, as far as I care.”

The jab was meant to be playful more than anything else, but something flashes across Viktor’s eyes. Something angry. Yuri hasn’t seen anything like it before from him. But it disappears too quickly for it to be properly examined.

Desiring a change in subject, Yuri glances at the medal, still twisted along the neck of that empty wine bottle. He approaches it and, quite gently, disentangles it from the glass. Yuri is a bit in awe, holding such a precious object between his fingers like this. After all, Yuri’s dream has always been to win a medal just like it. How could Viktor be so careless with it? Doesn’t he know what it means?

In an almost faraway voice, Viktor asks: “Do you want it?”

Yuri turns to see Viktor’s chin still buried in Makkachin’s fur, like he is too exhausted to lift his own head. There’s a certain apathy in his eyes that Yuri’s not sure he likes. Maybe it’s a result of the alcohol. Maybe Viktor is just tired from his recent, flawless performance.

Yuri scoffs. “Of course I want it. That’s why my senior debut is next year.”

“No. Do you want *that* medal? The one right there.”

Squinting, Yuri demands, “Why the fuck would I want that? It’s yours.”

Viktor shrugs. “I have four more at home. It’s not like I need another.”

The comment is so flippant that Yuri wants to pull his hair out. This is the goddamn *Grand Prix Final Medal* they’re talking about, for Christ’s sake. The figure skating prize to end all figure skating prizes. Yet Viktor Nikiforov is offering it to Yuri like it’s the last slice of pizza for which he no longer has the appetite.

“Winning is the whole point, Viktor,” Yuri snaps as he carefully places the medal on a nearby newspaper, its gold contrasting oddly with the black and white paper. “People would kill for this thing. You should take better care of it.”

“If you say so, Yura,” is Viktor’s bitterness-laden response. “But I think it makes me look like an old show dog… prancing around… doing the same old tricks that I have for ages, no matter how new I try to make them…”

The tone is striking, sounding so disgruntled that -- for a moment-- Yuri almost feels obligated to console him. And Yuri never wants to comfort anyone.

But of course that urge is completely eradicated when Viktor, in a truly disgusting fashion, presses his dog’s cheeks between his palms and coos, “*Right, Makkachin? A show dog! And not nearly as cute as you are, no siree!*”
The dog licks his face and Viktor laughs cheerfully. So much for that bitterness.

“How drunk are you, exactly?” Yuri asks cautiously, figuring that might be the cause of this strange behavior.

“How barely. But I’ll lay off the champagne, if it’ll make you feel better.”

Viktor rises to his feet, brushing dog fur off of his suit jacket. The bitterness vanished, there’s suddenly a smile plastered to his face, the expression stunningly contrastive to the apathy and resentment that Yuri just witnessed. In fact, he finds himself wondering if it is a ruse. If it is a fake smile to denote the pleasure and contentedness that does not exist in Viktor’s case. A lovely little mask that causes fans to swoon and judges to sigh in admiration. Wouldn’t that be something ridiculous?

No, no, that can’t possibly be true, can it? Viktor has always worn the same smile -- in front of Yuri, in front of the cameras, in front of a roaring crowd of ice skating fans. Someone cannot possibly lie to the world that completely -- not without lying to themselves quite a bit throughout, Yuri figures.

“C’mon, Yura,” Viktor urges, gesturing toward the door, and then to Yuri’s suit. “And let’s get that tie fixed up before Yakov has a heart attack, yeah?”

The start of the banquet is exactly as Viktor expects. Between the chords of the muted musical compositions, the drone of small-talk around him, and the staggering, slow movement of the people in the elegant ballroom, Viktor wonders how long it will be before he actually falls asleep on his feet.

The wine keeps his resentment in check, at least. It allows the whole night to blur into something more hurried and tolerable. And the faster it goes, the better.

Another banquet. Because… why not? Why not win one more time? Why not keep the same procedure he always has?

The congratulations he receives sound forced, and the compliments on his routines reek of such defeated envy that Viktor feels guilty. Yes, guilty. Everyone is getting tired of him winning, of him stealing every title. He knows that they’re waiting for him to age out… waiting for his muscles and his reputation to atrophy… waiting for the day that Viktor Nikiforov is thrust from the sport not because he wasn’t good enough, but because his time was simply up.

Not to mention that most of the skaters who Viktor knew over the years have retired by now. All of these skaters -- their faces are fresh and young and unfamiliar. Viktor feels like an unwelcome presence among them… a trend that is quickly fading in favor of new fashions.

He used to enjoy the banquets. He used to enjoy skating. But even he is growing tired of correctly predicting the outcome of every competition and every banquet. It’s the same story every year -- he wins, he gloats. He can’t even imagine what his rivals and the audience must be feeling toward the anticlimax of it all.

Yuri has hovered by Viktor’s side throughout the banquet thus far. He knows that this is because the younger skater probably looks up to him, even if he will never admit it. They hardly exchange words -- not until Yuri makes a disgusted sound in the back of his throat, the noise shaking Viktor out of a blank reverie.

“I can’t believe that moron actually had the nerve to show up.”
Unsure of what Yuri is referring to, Viktor follows the line of Yuri’s gaze to the face of another boy who Viktor vaguely recognizes. There are shimmering brown eyes, shielded by large, blue-framed glasses, and a dark shock of hair falling over his forehead. They were the same features of the person who wordlessly refused Viktor a commemorative photo at the GPF Stadium, much to Viktor’s confusion.

People don’t refuse Viktor often. When they do, it’s memorable.

“Who is that?” Viktor asks Yuri, curious.

“That’s the skater from Japan who fucked up all his jumps. Didn’t you see his performance? It was cringeworthy.”

“No, I didn’t,” Viktor replies, his eyes still glued to the boy’s glum face. His eyes, in turn, are focused on nothing in particular in their silent despair. He hardly reacts to anything, even as the man beside him chides him endlessly. This man is older, with a ponytail -- a coach, perhaps?

Viktor can’t exactly explain how he missed the performance. He must have been preoccupied with an interview at the time. Or maybe he was just too concerned with his own routine to even consider this other, then-unknown competitor.

“Whatever. All I’m saying is that it’s time for him to fucking retire,” Yuri continues furiously. “He’s an embarrassment to the whole sport, I think. An embarrassment to my name.”

“Your name?”

“Yeah. His name’s Yuuri also, but with two u’s. Yuuri Cat-something. It would get too damn confusing for us to both be in the senior division next year. So yeah. Retirement’s his best option.”

Viktor scrutinizes the boy further, trying to gauge his age. He can see that maturity just slightly overwhelms the youth in the boy’s face, and Viktor is shocked to realize that this ‘Yuuri’ must be one of the oldest skaters at the banquet. Most certainly not older than Viktor, whose seniority surpasses that of every skater in the room, but perhaps only slightly younger than Christophe Giacometti, one of Viktor’s last remaining friends in competition. Early twenties, maybe? Compared to Viktor’s 27 years, that is nothing. And yet Yuri is urging him to retire. He wonders if, deep down, Yuri harbors the same sentiment toward Viktor as well.

As a waitress maneuvers around Yuuri and his coach, Viktor sees Yuuri’s hand snatch a flute of golden champagne from her tray. The contents of the glass instantly disappear into Yuuri’s mouth, but his lips are still twisted with bitter disappointment as they pull away from the rim.

“Ugh. Would someone please kick those two out!” Yuri complains in a newly indignant tone -- a subject change. With Yuri’s cue, Viktor finds his gaze drawn to a far more irritating target -- a boy with an undercut, making out passionately with a girl at the edge of the ballroom. Viktor’s disgust echoes Yuri’s. Honestly, what is this? A school dance?

At first, Viktor doesn’t notice the atmosphere at the banquet changing. He’s too forcibly engaged in boring small-talk between Yuri, Christophe, and an Austrian skater who’s flirting just a bit too obviously with Viktor. He decided twenty minutes ago that he wasn’t interested -- he could feel the lack of spark from the start.

In fact, Viktor hasn’t really felt a spark with someone in years, and has started to wonder if the ice on which he skates has permanently numbed his feelings, or frozen his heart.
The last time was over ten years ago, when Viktor, at sixteen years old, found himself crushing on Makkachin’s groomer -- a boy named Roman. Green-eyed, brown-haired Roman…

Roman, who loved Makkachin, who had criminally contagious smiles and laughter, who told hilarious jokes -- the kinds that left Viktor’s sides hurting for hours afterward. With every visit, there was always a new gag for Viktor, keeping him constantly and joyously on his toes. Viktor eagerly anticipated each grooming appointment.

He’s not quite sure when he realized that, after years of going to Roman’s father’s store, he had developed a crush on Roman. Maybe it was the fluttering in his stomach that gave it away. The heat in the cheeks he felt while looking at him. The daydreams he had of grabbing him and kissing him and--

Yes, he daydreamed about Roman quite a bit. Sometimes, during his visits, Roman would tell Viktor about a girl he had a crush on in his college -- a girl with long, blonde hair. Viktor grew out his hair as a result, certain that he could impress Roman just as well. He fantasized about quitting skating to attend Roman’s university, about sharing classes with Roman and maybe even a dorm and maybe even getting married someday and--

Of course, even the most innocent of Viktor’s daydreams were prevented a few days after Viktor’s seventeenth birthday. He took a chance -- innocently invited Roman out to coffee. Roman saw through him so easily, his discomfort with the situation evident. They were only halfway through their drinks when Roman stammered out an apology, explaining that he didn’t swing that way, that he was sorry for giving Viktor the wrong idea.

Viktor pretended that it was fine, that Roman was misinterpreting Viktor’s intentions. Of course he only felt a platonic attachment to Roman… don’t be silly! Everything was fine.

The next day, he found a new groomer for Makkachin. He hasn’t seen Roman since. And from that point forward, Viktor hadn’t felt much attachment toward anyone except Makkachin. Sometimes, he would experience certain sexual cravings that he wanted satisfied, but there was often nothing more than that. There have been women over the years in addition to the men, some of them famous, some of them not, some of them skaters, some of them not. In each case, once the novelty that the relationship initially presented finally wore off, he would always grow bored and move onwards to something new. That was just his way.

His heart has grown to be in his skates, not in his chest.

Lately, however, he has stagnated in his singularity, and has been unable to motivate himself to become something otherwise. Being single is blissfully peaceful and uncompromising. It seems like recent weariness toward his situation in skating has even permeated his ability to maintain a social life.

The Austrian skater begins to talk about opera (like that indicates sophistication or something, whoop-de-doo) when laughter becomes audible. At first, Viktor tries to ignore it, but it grows in volume and in quantity. He glances at its source, which is behind the person to whom he is speaking.

To his surprise, he sees the Japanese competitor -- Yuuri -- standing in the center of the ballroom, swaying to the pop song that has recently begun to play over the speakers. His cheeks are visibly flushed, and his tie is hanging loosely around his neck. At the sight of him, people are laughing heartily -- he is, in their view, comically drunk.

“What the hell is he doing?” Yuri mumbles. Viktor has no clue, but he keeps watching, finding the sight considerably more interesting than what the Austrian skater has to say.
As the music begins to pick up, so do Yuuri’s movements. He twirls and twists and dances in time to the beat, maintaining remarkable coordination and rhythm despite his drunken state. A part of Viktor wonders whether he is even drunk at all. But then again, given Yuuri’s previous, dejected state… it’s pretty obvious that alcohol had a hand in this change in attitude.

Yuuri is smiling and laughing so brightly that Viktor can’t help smiling too. Which is… strange. Because really, what does he know about this guy?

As he dances, Yuuri is yelling things in Japanese that, initially, no one can understand. Somehow, he strings together enough English words to articulate his desire for the music’s volume to be increased. To Viktor’s surprise, someone actually obliges, and Yuuri accordingly grows bolder. Viktor can hardly believe he is watching the same depressed-looking man from before.

“Uh oh,” Christophe murmurs with amusement. “I think someone has had one too many glasses of champagne.”

“More like ten too many,” is Yuri’s comment, perhaps said a bit too loudly. From the center of the hall, Yuuri spins around, points to Yuri, and yells: “You!”

Yuri freezes, his eyes wide in confusion. Before anyone can properly react, Yuuri is storming toward their little group. His finger is pointed accusingly at Yuri when a stream of slurred Japanese comes from his mouth. Only one word from it is intelligible because it is in English, a language that Viktor understands moderately well: “Dance-Off.”

Yuuri -- with his alcohol-reddened cheeks and sparkling, drunken eyes -- is challenging Yuri to a dance-off.

Viktor starts laughing so hard he can hardly breathe.

“No way!” Yuri rebuffs angrily, swiping his arm out in front of him to demonstrate just how unacceptable the demand is.

Yuuri does not relent, however, and says something in a distinctly challenging, mocking tone. The words are still in Japanese, so their exact meaning is a mystery to everyone within the immediate vicinity, but their implicit meaning is obvious. Yuuri is essentially accusing Yuri of being a chicken.

Yuri understands that much, and his face reddens with anger.

“Well, Yura, it doesn’t seem like you have much of a choice,” Viktor manages between peals of laughter. “He’s thrown down the gauntlet.”

There is a beat of consideration, and then, finally, Yuri grumbles his bitter assent rather than appear to be a coward. Thus, he shoves everyone out of his way to arrive at the center of the dancefloor. Yakov, who is across the hall, demands to know what Yuri is doing, but he is ignored. Other people snicker as Yuuri stumbles his way through the crowd to join his opponent.

They stand opposite each other, and Viktor finds his eyes just a little too captivated as Yuuri peels off his suit jacket and assumes a graceful stance, his dress shirt rolled up to his elbows. The other Yuri is bristling with anger and discomfort, all-too-awkward and all-too-young in his dark blue suit.

This should be good, Viktor thinks as he pulls out his phone, while Christophe assumes a spot across the room to get another angle. No matter what happens, they figure that they will able to hold evidence of this night over Yuri’s head for years.

The dancing begins.
The next song is something from America, clearly. Hip hop. Something with a strong beat that immediately causes Yuri’s eyes to widen -- this is not a genre to which the young Russian skater is accustomed. It’s not his style, which gravitates more toward the classical.

Yuuri, on the other hand, seems completely unfazed as he -- to Viktor’s astonishment -- begins to breakdance.

The moves are somewhat recognizable to Viktor, given his study of many types of dance, though he has never personally practiced them. Jackhammers, flares, deadman floats -- all of them are performed with perfect balance and rhythm, the movements as mechanical and fluid as heartbeats. In fact, he is so in sync with the music that he seems to be its source.

Yuri ends up just following the older boy’s lead, desperately trying to imitate the movements and keep up. It’s not exactly working, in Viktor’s opinion. Yuri, with sweat falling profusely from his lengthy blond hair, is losing this dance-off -- losing to a drunk man from Japan whose skills Yuri was insulting only a half hour before.

The song ends, leaving both Yuri’s panting from the exertion but standing still. Some people in the audience seem scandalized, others are clapping, the rest are laughing. Viktor is caught between both of the latter camps.

It is then that he realizes that he forgot to actually snap the photos, having been too engrossed in the dancing itself. A specific person’s dancing in particular, actually. Yuuri’s dancing.

He’ll ask Christophe to send him the pictures later.

“Well?” Yuri demands to no one in particular, still breathing heavily. “Who won?”

At first, no one answers. But then… well, Viktor feels compelled to provide an honest result. So, in an enthusiastic voice, he yells back: “Well, that’s obvious, isn’t it? Japanese Yuuri!”

There are some mumbles of agreement, a few rhetorical questions along the lines of “What the hell is going on?” Apparently, Viktor has appointed himself as the judge in this competition, because no one else explicitly voices their opinion.

“Viktor!” Yuri screeches indignantly, betrayal glinting in his green eyes.

Simultaneously, Yuuri squeals the same thing, but in a euphoric voice. His blush seems to increase tenfold, and he clutches at his heart, like he cannot believe that Viktor chose him.

For some reason, Viktor fights a blush too.

Approaching them both, Viktor holds out his phone and beams, “Let’s get a photo of you two!”

He scoops Yuuri’s jacket, discarded from before, off the floor and helps Yuuri back into it. He then tries to arrange the two boys into a photo, but Yuri furiously refuses, storming off toward the edge of the ballroom. That leaves Viktor with his phone pointed toward just Yuuri, who is blushing and reveling in his recent victory. Somehow, he spots a waiter with a bottle of champagne and snatches that, raising it up to display his pride before downing several more gulps.

Viktor snaps photos of that, for some reason. He can hardly justify doing so to himself… not when he is struggling to quell his laughter so much.

The bottle of champagne is nearly spilled everywhere before Viktor manages to wrestle it out of Yuuri’s drunken grasp and safely deposit it upon a nearby table. Turning back to Yuuri, Viktor finds
that the other man has shucked his jacket and started dancing again, his arms outstretched toward the ceiling. His smile is sly and seductive, and his eyes... they’re surprisingly focused on Viktor, their intensity rendering him speechless. If Yuuri is so drunk, shouldn’t those eyes be hazy?

“Dance with me!” is all that Viktor catches amid a stream of unintelligible, slurred Japanese words.

Yuuri spins around and proceeds with some cross between tango and flamenco, each motion smooth and sensual. Viktor’s breath catches in his incredulity at the request... his heartbeat quickens. Between its thumps, Viktor can hear people mocking Yuuri... mocking how the last place skater could possibly ask the Viktor Nikiforov to dance like that... and further, they are wondering why Viktor is egging him on like this. Viktor, who is always so poised and dignified, encouraging some boy’s drunken mischief? Unbelievable.

Viktor doesn’t know the answers to any of their questions. All he knows is that this situation has taken him -- and perhaps the whole of the room -- off guard. His laughter has left him blushing and smiling with something like adrenaline buzzing in his veins, and damn Yuuri’s dancing really is quite good. Viktor loves tango. He loves flamenco. These are the styles that he most frequently incorporates into his work.

It’s probably the most surprising thing he has done in a while -- deciding to say, “What the hell?” and dance with Yuuri. Surprising to Yuuri, surprising to his fellow skaters and their coaches, and surprising to Viktor himself.

He falls into step behind the other man, raising his arms in the brisk, sensual motions that are so unique to these forms of dance. Yuuri stands with his back to Viktor, moving independently, as if he had forgotten the request he made only a few moments ago, proceeding with the dance on his own. And well... Viktor sees no sense in that. What’s the phrase? It takes two to tango?

He approaches slowly, carefully. They’re dancing, aren’t they? They have to maintain their grace, keep everything smooth as they establish their partnership through proximity. In this they cannot fail; he wants this dance to be so beautiful that there will be nothing to mock. Especially with Yuuri -- his partner -- holding his own like this, his body as fluent and measured as the notes he dances between.

Finally, they’re moving side by side, with the flamenco in the dance acting as a conversation far richer than anything words could provide. Their steps are a call-and-response, rapid and emphatic and powerful. Arms held high and strong, curved slightly and pointed toward each other, emphasizing each partner’s moves. Their smiles are shared.

Somehow, the dance becomes almost reminiscent of a song -- a duet. Two harmonies, different and intriguing on their own, combining to create a single melody in this strange fusion of flamenco and tango.

Each move is so spontaneous, Viktor’s brain has absolutely no idea what he’s doing, but somehow his body does and that’s enough. And Yuuri... Yuuri is drunk, but how drunk can he really be, dancing better than most professionals like this?

They play off one another perfectly. Teasingly, Yuuri uses his index fingers to give himself horns, pantomiming a bull, and Viktor, seeing this, removes his own suit jacket and assumes the role of the matador, shaking the garment exaggeratedly to attract his partner toward him. Yuuri obliges, arching his back and sliding toward him almost seductively. It is only at the last second that Yuri performs a carousel combination, pivoting and sidestepping his partner. Victor expects such a move, uses it to his advantage by re-donning his jacket in time with the music. What he wasn’t expecting, however, was for Yuuri to grab his waist, pulling him close.
The dance has officially become a tango.

Yuuri leads confidently, his dark eyes capturing Viktor’s entirely. And Viktor… well, in all the
dancing he has practiced in his life, he has never followed. Leading is his preference, if not his
requirement. But this time, with Yuuri’s arms around his waist… he lets it happen. He’s fine with it.
Maybe a little too fine.

Dear lord, are they making fools of themselves. But Viktor decides against caring.

They side-step, turn, assume a promenade position. After resuming their steps, Yuuri surprises him
with a parada and Viktor laughs as he adjusts his own footwork. They pivot, carry out a volcada
con adorno . The song is ending very soon -- Viktor can tell. Can Yuuri?

Evidently, he can.

A startled sound escapes Viktor’s mouth as Yuuri slides his hand up Viktor’s thigh and squeezes .
His other hand cups the back of Viktor’s head, lowering him downward. Viktor follows the cue,
leaning backward, raising his leg like the champion figure skater that he is. Yuuri’s grip keeps it
steady -- keeps him steady, holds his entire weight in his grasp. It is in this position that they end the
dance, Yuuri’s face, glistening with sweat and marked with an ecstatic smile, hovering mere
centimeters above Viktor’s. Their noses are almost touching, and Viktor is grinning so hugely that
his cheeks have started to hurt.

Should they kiss? Viktor thinks it seems like a good idea. A very good idea, even. To… to complete
the dance, of course. For show, nothing more.

The song has ended but they haven’t moved. Viktor is not at all opposed to this. In fact, he finds
himself disappointed when Yuuri finally relinquishes his hold on him, raising Viktor to his feet. The
former touch of Yuuri’s hand on his thigh feels red-hot, as do Viktor’s cheeks. He should calm
down. Calm down.

And yet, Shit, is the only intelligible thought that Viktor (who, up until this moment, incorrectly
considered himself sophisticated and articulate) can form after that dance.

Because that… that dance was a lot more than Viktor anticipated.

Viktor wants to say something to Yuuri -- compliment him on his dancing skills, maybe? Shit, no.
Seriously? Viktor asks himself. Is that really what he wants to do, after a sultry dance like that? No,
he should ask Yuuri to come back to his hotel room -- wait… no… that’s not right either. Yuuri’s
drunk .

A compliment it is, then. Viktor opens his mouth, prepared to speak--

“You!” Yuuri is calling yet again, this time with his finger pointed at Chris. “Dance-off!”

Chris smirks like he has been waiting for such an opportunity all night, and Viktor misses his.

Viktor Nikiforov is known for being suave -- for being charming and sexy and something of a
playboy. But despite all of his charms, despite all of his experience… the sight of Yuuri shamelessly
and skillfully poledancing ends up being one of the few things that causes Viktor Nikiforov to
fucking lose it .
He’s not quite sure how the banquet turned into *this* chaotic (and sexy?) mess. At some point, a stripper pole appeared in the center of the ballroom -- its arrival was a mystery, though Viktor suspects that Chris had something to do with it. But then Chris was stripping, and Yuuri (to Viktor’s… delight? *Why* was he delighted?) was stripping too, and then things became R-rated very quickly.

Chris knowing how to poledance? That wasn’t exactly surprising. But *Yuuri* knowing how to poledance? That was a complete surprise.

(And not exactly an unpleasant one in Viktor’s opinion…)

(Okay, a really, *really* pleasant one in Viktor’s opinion…)

So now, here Yuuri is, stripped down to nothing but boxer briefs and a tie, twisting himself around that metal pole like he’s a snake, displaying a muscular dexterity that probably should *not be possible* for someone this drunk.

Chris, of course, is nearly naked as well, but Viktor hardly notices. He’s too fixated on Yuuri, this man he hardly knows -- a man who just transformed a boring banquet into a *raging* party that Viktor will probably remember for years.

Yes, right now, Viktor Nikiforov is *having fun*. Sure, his heart is self-destructively racing toward cardiac arrest and his thoughts are dirtier than they have been in a *long time*, but… he really is having fun. A lot of it.

God, who is this guy, exactly? *And* is he free tomorrow night?

Is Viktor blushing? He feels like his face is *on fire*. (Along with other parts of him that may or may not be on fire as well).

As Yuuri’s dance-off with Chris continues, Viktor resists the urge to empty the contents of his wallet into Yuuri’s boxer briefs.

When Yuuri finishes his… performance… Viktor spots him struggling to re-button his shirt, which had been thrown at the base of the pole. Of course, Viktor does not hesitate to approach and help him.

Viktor normally isn’t like this. He isn’t the type to fight for other people’s time -- to cling and demand attention. Usually, he is given attention freely… sometimes so abundantly that he has to *hide* from it.

But here, right now, Viktor has stooped to the level of *buttoning Yuuri’s shirt* just to be *acknowledged* by the other man. That’s not normal. Not for him. Everything about this is new and sudden and inexplicable.

It’s clear that the younger man is quickly tiring out. It’s late, and the drinks are probably heavily contributing to his exhaustion. Maybe Viktor should find Yuuri’s coach… have him brought back to his hotel. But then again… Yuuri’s coach must have left long ago, if Yuuri was able to get away with this much mischief.

Is it wrong that Viktor is so glad that Yuuri’s coach left when he did? It feels pretty wrong, but that doesn’t change his opinion on the matter. How skewed has Viktor’s moral compass become since
that tango, he starts to wonder?

As Viktor (reluctantly) does the final button on Yuuri’s dress shirt, Yuuri spins around and points to another skater -- the Austrian one to whom Viktor was speaking earlier. Yuuri is up for one more dance-off, apparently. Viktor chuckles with amusement.

Suddenly, Yuuri turns back to Viktor and throws his arms around him, enclosing Viktor in a hug. And God….okay… Viktor doesn’t know what to do. The other boy’s body is entirely flush against him, face warm and pressed against Viktor’s chest. At first, Viktor thinks that he can handle this. It’s just a hug -- no big deal, _people hug all the time, dammit_. Maybe he’s just grateful for Viktor’s buttoning of Yuuri’s shirt?

Yuuri is mumbling unintelligibly in Japanese again, staring up at Viktor with sparkling eyes. The sound of his voice is still so hopeful and bright. Viktor thinks he likes it… he doesn’t know why, but he _likes it_.

And then, to Viktor’s absolute bewilderment, Yuuri starts to _grind_ against him. And that’s when all of Viktor’s _experience_ and _knowledge_ becomes meaningless -- this feeling, above all others, shocks his mind into complete blankness. And it’s not like Viktor hasn’t gone clubbing before, hasn’t had his fair share of men and women grinding against him at parties. But for some reason, this is _different_ . He doesn’t know why. It’s beyond explanation. All he knows is that this hasn’t happened before… not like _this_.

And then Yuuri does another unexpected thing. He hugs Viktor tighter, briefly switches to English, and yells:

“Be my coach, Viktoooor!”

_Absolutely_ , is the first thought that comes to Viktor’s mind in response, his brain too overwhelmed by the sensation of Yuuri against him like this to think anything else. But then his logic returns to him, and he gasps. _What_ did Viktor almost agree to just there? Viktor is a skater, not a coach, for God’s sake. He doesn’t know the first thing about coaching. Already, he has even started to plan next season’s routines. How could he even consider throwing all that away?

And further, why isn’t he pushing _Yuuri_ away?

Viktor shouldn’t be enjoying this so much. He _shouldn’t_. But _goddammit_ … he is. He is enjoying it _so much_ and he’s blushing and Viktor Nikiforov _doesn’t_ blush.

Yuuri is first to pull away, ready to begin his next dance-off. Viktor, to his own terror, doesn’t want him to go. Like one of those cliches, Viktor’s heart is pounding right out of his chest. He doesn’t know what to do.

At the end of the banquet, Viktor volunteers to bring Yuuri back to his hotel room. _Yuuri’s_ hotel room, he means. Not his own hotel room, of course (unfortunately?)

Yuri was furious at Viktor’s decision, demanding to know not only how Viktor could choose Yuuri over him in the dance-off -- “ _You traitorous piece of shit!”_ were his exact words -- but also why Viktor was bothering to haul Yuuri’s ass anywhere. Viktor brushed him off, telling him to catch the cab with Yakov and Mila before it was too late. Yuri did as he was told, but not without a lot of grumbling and cursing.
By now, Yuuri is bordering on unconscious from his exhaustion and drunkenness. Through a lot of English, Russian, and Japanese Google Translate, Viktor just manages to glean Yuuri’s hotel and room number from his drunken gibberish, and directs a cab there.

Yuuri spends most of the ride with his head resting against Viktor’s shoulder, humming quietly to himself. The buoyant energy that Yuuri previously displayed must be rapidly depleting into nothingness. Viktor figures that it was lucky that Yuuri did not challenge anyone else to a dance-off. He might have fallen asleep mid-step.

Upon arrival at the hotel, Viktor has to practically carry Yuuri to his room. The boy’s feet are dragging along the ground, creating friction with the carpeting that slows them considerably. More distracting, however, is the way that Yuuri keeps burying his face into the crook of Viktor’s neck and mumbling in Japanese, which Viktor may or may not find incredibly sexy.

Honestly, what is happening to Viktor?

To find a room key, he tries his best to not only retrieve Yuuri’s wallet from his back pocket, but also stop himself from enjoying that search too much. In only one of those pursuits, however, he completely fails.

With the wallet in hand, Viktor sneaks a glance at Yuuri’s license and can’t read a damn thing because it’s in Japanese. A curse, uttered in Russian, escapes his mouth. He still doesn’t know Yuuri’s last name and the card doesn’t help, so he makes a mental note to research it later.

Using the key, Viktor unlocks the door to Yuuri’s hotel room and pulls its owner inside. Yuuri is still nuzzling against him, breath hot on Viktor’s skin, but his grip on Viktor is loosening. Exhaustion is really starting to overtake him.

Viktor hauls him to the bed and, after pulling down the covers, drops Yuuri on the mattress. Yuuri seems disoriented by this at first, blinking repeatedly at the ceiling from behind his thick glasses. A moment of silence passes in which Viktor just watches him, wondering what he is thinking.

Finally, he looks to Viktor, that bright smile returning to his face. This time, however, it is marked by fatigue.

“Viktooor,” he whines, outstretching his arms to indicate that Viktor should join him in the bed. It’s a tempting offer, of course… but Viktor is well aware that Yuuri is very, very drunk. Plus, Viktor literally just met him. Met him tonight, at the banquet. Which is strange to think about. The banquet felt both too short and too long, a moment before and a million years ago.

Viktor feels like his perception of reality has been altered. His mind is frantic and irrational, searching for excuses to stay with Yuuri right now even when he knows he shouldn’t. He is wondering whether he could trust himself in Yuuri’s bed, wondering whether Yuuri would wake up and be okay with it. He even wonders whether he should accept the position as Yuuri’s coach, mostly because it’s one of many other positions that he would like to try with Yuuri.

And, oh god, Viktor has truly lost it.

“I’ll come back tomorrow morning to make sure you’re okay,” Viktor says, carefully crafting his English and desperately hoping that Yuuri understands. “We can… get coffee or something. Okay?”

Is he really trying this again?

Yuuri is staring up at him blankly, the smile faded and expressionless, head cocked. Viktor is unsure how to interpret that. Maybe he misunderstood?
Thus, he repeats the last word once more.

“Okay?”

Finally, Yuuri echoes, “Okay,” and Viktor’s heart simultaneously begins to inflate and pound like a jackhammer. He chooses to ignore how flat Yuuri’s tone of voice was, instead attributing that to the other man’s tiredness.

That assumption seems especially correct when Yuuri sniffs and flops backward onto the bed. He is asleep within moments, dead to the world in the way that only drunk people can be.

Viktor does his best to leave soundlessly.

“I’m a dead man, Makkachin. A dead man.”

Viktor climbs into bed and his poodle follows him, snuggling against him to quell his owner’s melodramatic antics. It doesn’t work. The contact only reminds Viktor of the way that Yuuri leaned upon him during the taxi ride, and Viktor’s cheeks heat up.

And then more images are flashing through Viktor’s mind -- Yuuri breakdancing, Yuuri doing the tango, Yuuri poledancing, Yuuri *grinding* against Viktor and pleading for him to be his coach.

“You should’ve seen him. He was…” Viktor searches for the right word, vaguely panicking when nothing seems accurate. Eventually, he decides on the adjective “beautiful” because it’s closest to what Viktor feels is true, even if it is not a perfect description. He feels that the word “beautiful” isn’t multifaceted enough -- it would need to encapsulate more of Yuuri’s chaotic, spontaneous, and energetic sides.

Stricken by an idea, Viktor grabs his phone off the nightstand and scrolls through his photos, finally locating the ones from the banquet. Seeing them now, Yuuri looks messy and absolutely *drunk*, eyes glazed over by booze. In person, however, the impression that Viktor received was far more charming. So charming that, even now, Viktor finds himself smiling at the sight of Yuuri’s face. He shows the phone to Makkachin.

“This is him,” Viktor says, grinning with misplaced pride. The sentence seems incomplete, even. Normally, people would say something like *“this is him, my boyfriend,”* or *“this is him, my husband.”* But Viktor has no label for Yuuri, no relationship beyond *“this is him, the guy that grinded on me at a party.”*

He wonders if Yuuri will wake up tomorrow and show his coach a picture of Viktor, saying *“this is him, my new coach.”* Of course, Viktor hasn’t agreed to anything but… it’s a nice thought.

Viktor shoves his face into his hands, cursing to himself. What, what, *what* is going on with him? Viktor is an adult -- a twenty-seven-year-old, mature and experienced adult -- and yet he is acting like a lovelorn teenager, romanticizing some sick caricature of love at first sight.

Makkachin begins to lick the screen of Viktor’s phone. Viktor takes that as both a good omen and a blessing.

---

With two coffees clutched in his hands, steaming lightly through the openings in their lids, Viktor finds it difficult to knock on the door of Yuuri’s hotel room. He sets the cups on a nearby table -- the
fancy, gilded kind that hotels always seem to have in their hallways, its surface mostly consumed by a hefty vase of fake flowers.

There’s an ornate mirror behind it, and Viktor takes a moment to examine himself in that. Viktor may or may not have spent hours agonizing over his current outfit and look, trying to determine the correct medium between sexy, chic, and casual. Viktor likes to consider himself a fashionable person. He also likes to consider himself an attractive person. Thus, it was quite an ordeal, trying to find an ensemble that would not only accentuate those qualities in himself, but also live up to Viktor’s appearance in a suit from the night before. It wouldn’t exactly hurt if Yuuri thought that Viktor looked good all the time.

So Viktor went with his Armani jacket, paired with a black v-neck, and dark-washed jeans. Casual, but sophisticated.

Deciding that his hair is in its proper place and that his collar is pristinely folded, Viktor repositions one coffee in one hand, and the other in the crook of his elbow. His remaining free hand is used to rap briskly upon Yuuri’s hotel room door.

Viktor tries not to hold his breath as he hears movement from inside. The door swings open--

To reveal a middle-aged woman with grey-blonde hair. Her eyes squint accusingly at Viktor.

“Who are you? What do you want?” she asks in Russian.

Viktor is taken aback for a few moments, and he checks the room number toward the side of the door frame. No, it’s definitely correct. This is Yuuri’s room from last night -- he is sure of it.

“Is… Is Yuuri Katsuki here?” Viktor inquires carefully, hoping against hope that this woman knows the answer. He is suddenly glad that he looked up Yuuri’s last name this morning. Otherwise, Viktor might not have been able to even properly ask that question.

He also learned that Yuuri has almost no social media presence, and his Wikipedia page was nearly empty as well, leaving Viktor utterly frustrated in his quest to learn more about him. In all respects, Yuuri Katsuki could be considered an infinite mystery.

“Who?” the woman asks in confusion, evidently deepening that mystery. “I think you’ve been given the wrong room number.”

“No, no. This is his room. I’m sure of it.”

“Not since eight in the morning, it hasn’t been. That’s when I got here.”

Viktor’s heart drops down to his toes. If this woman has been here for that long, and this is definitely the room that Viktor visited last night, that could only mean one thing…

Yuuri checked out. Hours ago, he checked out of this hotel, and Viktor missed his chance to see him again.

After bitterly apologizing to the woman and throwing both coffees in a nearby trashcan, Viktor uses his phone to check the arrived and departed planes in the Sochi airport, just in case Yuuri would still be there. There were no planes heading to Japan today. America, China, France, Italy, other parts of Russia, definitely, some of them having left already. But none to Japan.

So where exactly did Yuuri go?
Yuri Plisetsky hates airports. They’re always stuffy, gross, loud, and filled with people. Currently, he is sitting at the terminal for a flight to St. Petersburg, his leg outstretched over the arms of several chairs -- just to make the point that no one should sit next to him. He is playing determinedly with his phone as he awaits the boarding process, headphones shoved into his ears, trying to ignore that he is in an airport at all.

Sitting across from him is the Swiss skater, Christophe Giacometti, whose dirty blonde (and badly dyed, Yuri suspects) hair glints in the light of the nearby window. Viktor occupies the seat next to Chris, his elbows on his knees and his head leaning on his hands. Evidently, Chris’s connecting flight to Geneva departs from St. Petersburg, so he and Viktor will be sharing adjacent seats for many hours today. Later, on the plane, and now, in the airport.

Yuri knows that Viktor isn’t particularly close with his Russian rinkmates. With the exception of Georgi, whose overly emotional personality Viktor has never liked anyway, most of them are much younger than he is. Not to mention that they all feel toward Viktor (Yuri can especially attest to this fact) due to the way that he traps them all in an enormous, inescapable shadow. Yuri figures that Viktor knows this, and keeps his distance accordingly.

But Chris is one of the few remaining skaters with whom Viktor maintains some semblance of friendship. Yuri finds this unfortunate. The two are always engaged in the stupidest, most ridiculous conversations known to mankind. Things like each other’s new cologne, underwear brands, pop music, skating competitions from the prehistoric era of their youth. The topics usually make Yuri want to gag, so he does his best to tune them out by focusing entirely on his phone.

But some of their words find their way into audibility anyway.

“You don’t happen to have his number or anything do you?” Yuri hears Viktor ask Chris, both of them mid-conversation.

“Me, Viktor? Why would I? I’ve barely talked to him.”

“Well, you did ask to pole-dance with him, so I figured that you two were at least acquaintances. But I suppose it is like you to just take any opportunity to strip.”

“Wait a second… why would you want his number, anyway? Did something happen last night at his hotel room?” Christophe says suspiciously.

Silence from Viktor succeeds his words, and Christophe gives an amused little gasp.

“Are you blushing, Viktor? What happened?”

“I’m not blushing! I just want to make sure he’s alright. He was very drunk last night when I brought him back, and gone this morning, so I’m worried that he died of alcohol poisoning or something--”

“You went to see him this morning too?” Chris effuses.

“To make sure he was alright!” Viktor protests indignantly.

“Oh, I knew there was something strange about the way you danced with him! I haven’t seen you like that since… actually, I’ve never seen you like that! And I’ve certainly never seen you blush. Believe me, I’ve tried.”

“You’re making assumptions.”
“Do tell -- what does the Japanese figure skater have that so many, including myself, seem to lack? It wasn’t the pole-dancing, I hope. I’ve worked hard on my skills and I refuse to be outdone by a drunk.”

Viktor is silent for several moments. Finally, he replies: “I just want to talk to him, Chris.”

“Considering that, as far as we know, he can barely speak anything but Japanese, that might be fairly difficult for you,” Chris points out.

“For me? What? Can you speak Japanese?”

“I picked up a little here and there.”

“Okay, well, what was he saying last night?”

“At which part? He was mumbling things for hours.”

“When he was--” Victor clears his throat, “hugging me.”

“You mean grinding on you.”

“Chris--”

“He said something like ‘my family owns a hotel’ and that you should come visit it. It was hard to catch all of it -- I’m not that good with the language. But you’re not actually thinking of doing it, are you? Coaching him, I mean. I understood that much of what he said.”

The noise of their conversation finally becomes too much for Yuri to take. He yanks his headphones out of his ears, glares at the men across from him, and demands, “What the hell are you two talking about?”

“Nothing!” Viktor and Chris say immediately and simultaneously, smiling with forced pleasantness - like two teenaged girls caught gossiping. Yuri hasn’t absorbed very much of what they have said, given his engrossment with his phone, but he can infer enough to know that they’re talking about the Japanese skater from last night. Yuuri Katsuki.

Yuri still can’t believe that he was beaten in the dance off. He’ll never forgive Viktor for it. And he most certainly won’t tolerate any mention of that skater now.

“Yeah, sure,” Yuri says petulantly. “You know what? I can’t wait to start skating next season -- without the other Yuuri in the running. Good riddance.”

“We don’t know that he’s retiring,” Viktor says indignantly, like the words offended him in particular. Yuri doesn’t understand why. In fact, Yuri has been confused about Viktor all day.

First, the older skater demanded copies of Yuri’s photos from the previous night (which were numerous, much to Viktor’s delight, considering the spot he maintained at the edge of the ballroom throughout the banquet). Yuri has also caught Viktor humming music from last night to himself (to Yuri’s utmost annoyance). And like Chris, Yuri has seen him blushing at random times, as if he were suddenly remembering something embarrassing.

The weariness that Yuri saw in him the day before -- it seems to have disappeared. Viktor is energetic and talkative, has even expressed ideas for a new short program. But he’s also oddly nervous. Oddly huffy and easily offended, like he -- a five-time Grand Prix Champion -- is no longer so sure of himself and wants to prove his worth again. The behavior is definitely very strange, in
Yuri’s opinion. But Viktor has always been eccentric, so changes in his behavior are not exactly unexpected.

Soon enough, the plane starts to board. For Yuri, the topic is dropped both verbally and mentally.

Yuri spends most of the plane ride sleeping. At one point on the flight, he opens half-lidded eyes to see Viktor watching a Youtube tutorial on his phone. It’s titled “Learn Japanese #1: Greetings.” Yuri is too tired to think much of it and promptly returns to his slumber, forgetting what he saw entirely.

A few days later, Yuri arrives at the rink in St. Petersburg to find Viktor already there, skating. He is choreographing that new program, it seems -- though Yuri doesn’t see anything wrong with his current one. Viktor is supposed to be a skating genius though, so maybe it isn’t Yuri’s place to question him.

Since practice hasn’t started yet, Yuri merely sits on the cold metal bleachers and watches, trying to understand how Viktor can pull such incredible moves out of seemingly thin air.

Certainly, Yuri has seen Viktor attempt choreography before. But this time, it is different. For each move he tries, he carefully watches his own reflection in the ice -- as if he is trying to ensure that he is copying someone else’s routine correctly. But that doesn’t make sense -- these moves are clearly Viktor’s, just Viktor’s -- never seen before.

“Not right,” he hears Viktor mumble to himself after performing a new step sequence, his skates skidding along the ice with a spray of frost. Oddly enough, Yuri can even see Viktor shaking his head in disappointment toward himself. But why would he be so disappointed? This is obviously a work in progress, and mistakes are to be expected.

“No, no,” Viktor continues to mumble furiously, struggling to articulate something to even himself. “He had more… more of a--”

He repeats the move, scrutinizing himself in the ice. There’s a different sort of emphasis in the dance this time, one that seems to place a greater force and control into the motion. This change seems to sufficiently placate Viktor, and he smiles almost blissfully.

Yuri starts to notice patterns in the choreography -- a sensuality. A flirtation. Viktor performs it well… but Yuri can notice something else underlying its superficial meaning. It’s not easy to pinpoint, but he sees that there’s a longing there too, underlying the physicality. Further, he realizes that its source is not the routine, though. Its source is Viktor himself -- like he is searching for something significant in these moves, but finding nothing that provides satisfaction.

Yuri wonders what’s wrong with him but doesn’t bother to ask.

Viktor doesn’t know what to do. For months, he has struggled with the thought of Yuuri Katsuki in the back of his mind, taunting him with memories of that stupid dance they shared, of Yuuri stripped down to his boxer briefs, of Yuuri pressing his body flush against Viktor’s, of Yuuri nuzzling his face into the crook of Viktor’s neck, of Yuuri, Yuuri, Yuuri ...

Yuuri, who literally abandoned Viktor the morning after the banquet, allowing Viktor to arrive at an already-vacated hotel room like a lovesick moron, leaving Viktor without so much as a phone
number or a mutual friend through which he could be found.

Viktor is bitter. Viktor is angry. He wants to move on, get back to the way he was, but Yuuri has wormed his way into so many aspects of Viktor’s life. He’s still practicing Japanese. He still scrolls through the photos of the banquet at least once every two days, maybe more often. He is still channeling his Yuuri-induced loneliness into his Stay Close to Me free program. And further… he’s still developing the Eros and Agape routines, which were based entirely on not only Yuuri’s dance from the banquet…but also Viktor’s reaction to it.

Eros, sexual love… was Yuuri. His seductive smile, his brisk yet fluid movements, his seamless fusion of flamenco and tango in the step sequences. The jumps, the spins -- they’re surprising in their dexterity and chaos, just like Yuuri was. And like Yuuri, the moves exude the impression of simultaneous unattainability and intimacy, all contained in a single person. Indeed, all of it was copied from Viktor’s memories of the Japanese figure skater he met at the banquet.

And then there was Agape. Agape, romantic love… to represent Viktor. Viktor, who realized, weeks later, that this was no mere crush or sexual desire. This was love. Viktor had fallen inexplicably in love, surrendered his sense to it -- became a different person as a result of it. There was innocence in that -- a smooth descent into something beautiful yet terrifying, something graceful yet formless, something sparkling and blinding and sad. There is a tragedy in agape’s selfless devotion, and Viktor is living that tragedy every day.

Viktor wonders which version of the short program he should pursue. Should he assume the role of Yuuri, his muse of Eros? Should he drown himself in the boy’s personality and actions, perhaps find vengeance in stealing the moves and the aura that Yuuri gave away in a drunken dance?

Or should Viktor take Agape, and lay his heart bare on the ice for Yuuri? Demonstrate to the world just how pathetically and hopelessly smitten Viktor is with some random boy from a banquet? A man who Viktor cannot even find? A man that has caused Viktor to regress into someone innocent and loving and yearning?

But then Viktor finds the video.

Viktor has spent an unbelievable amount of time fantasizing about how he might see Yuuri again. He has envisioned Yuuri showing up at his doorstep, or meeting him outside a competition, or dancing at a foreign nightclub during one of Viktor’s many travels. But never has he really considered something like this.

Now, he sits in his apartment, Makkachin caged between his legs and a phone clutched in his hand. On the screen is Yuuri, moving fluidly across the ice, copying Viktor’s Stay Close to Me free program -- essentially beating Viktor to the punch in his potential revenge. For all the anguish he has been caused, it was Viktor who planned to steal Yuuri’s moves and turn them against him. But no… Yuuri is doing it first. Yuuri is doing it better.

Because this isn’t just plain copying. No, no. This is more. This is an analytical response to Viktor’s routine, a separate rendition altogether. Because when Viktor dances it, he is desperately pleading with Yuuri to stay, to love him, to give a damn. But when Yuuri dances it…

When Yuuri dances it, he is emphatically saying, “Yes, I will stay with you. Yes, I want to stay with you. No, I will not let you be alone.”

With each movement, he is comforting and loving and gentle, determinedly working to fill the empty despair that Viktor’s version portrays.
And thus, when the video is over, when he is preparing to replay it again and again and again, Viktor is sure of one thing:

Viktor’s interpretation is the question, and Yuuri’s interpretation is the answer.

*Will you stay with me? Yes, I will stay with you.*

It is yet another duet that they have naturally and thoughtlessly formed together.

---

This is not a whim. This is calculated. This is the only logical conclusion and course of action for Viktor Nikiforov.

Viktor, who has been practically losing his mind for so long, thinking about this boy who left him after the banquet. Viktor, who felt like his soul had been *saved* by that video -- a video that said that Yuuri hadn’t forgotten him -- not at all. Instead… it said that Yuuri *wanted* Viktor in his life, said that he *admired* Viktor, said that he was *waiting* for Viktor.

And if Yuuri is waiting for Viktor, even just as a student awaiting a coach, then so be it. Viktor will take it.

He finds Yuuri’s home through the YouTube account that posted the video, which was associated with an ice skating rink in a Japanese town called Hasetsu. With that clue, it was not difficult to locate an inn bearing the last name Katsuki. Chris did say that Yuuri had mentioned his parents owning a hotel, after all.

Viktor books a plane ticket. Of course, Yakov tries to talk him out of it, but it doesn’t work -- Viktor is far beyond logic’s reach. When the plane takes off, he is smiling so genuinely that everyone would probably fail to recognize him.

---

**End Notes**

A/N: I actually know nothing about tango and flamenco and dance in general, so if anything I write is incorrect, I apologize. Not to mention that this is un-beta'd. I did my best with what research, spellcheck, and YouTube videos could give me. Also, I hope you enjoyed!

[Here's my tumblr.](https://example.com) Comments are very much appreciated!

I now have a sequel to this work in which Viktor reunites with Yuuri, if you’d like to give that a read as well. Why? Because I'm trash.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](https://example.com) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!