**Stop, Rewind, Restart**

by [SeptemberMorningBell](https://archiveofourown.org/users/SeptemberMorningBell)

**Summary**

When Yuuri looked down at the phone he’d rescued from the bedside table—the model practically prehistoric and enclosed in a scratched poodle covered case he hadn’t seen since the expletive-filled aftermath of Yuri Plisetsky phone-throwing incident #6—and added the bright “...2015” blaring at him from the screen to the cramped lonely single bed he woke up in and the mosaic of Victor—oh god, Victor—posters on the dirty walls, he barrelled headfirst straight through confusion, careened through every possible stage of panic like a champion sprinter in the anxiety Olympics, and landed in that uncanny state of calm that can only prelude a record shattering skate or life shattering recklessness. Considering that his life had apparently already been shattered—because somehow it was 2015 again and he’s in his old apartment in Detroit and Victor isn’t here why isn’t he here oh my god what if he doesn’t remember me—he was hoping for the former.

Yuuri wakes up five years in the past, before the Grand Prix series that led him to Sochi—and to Victor.

Fortunately, he’s not the only one.

Hold on to your plushies, skate fans, because this season’s about to get interesting.
Me: wow deadlines sure are approaching fast; I should probably get my shit together
Also Me: You know what, the Yuri on Ice fandom definitely needs another cliche time
travel AU

And here we are.
Inspired by JustBeHappy 's hilarious and wonderful fic, Standard Deviations

unbeta-ed, unedited, and completely unnecessary
Welcome to the Madness, people
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“Okay,” he told himself, breathing slowly and carefully because he knew better than anyone that calm is a fragile, fragile thing. “Okay. So somehow you woke up back in 2015, before the Grand Prix Finals.” Before Victor, a tiny voice in his mind supplied. Before the banquet, before China, before Barcelona. Before your wedding. He squashed it down with all the stubborn determination that had kept him skating til his feet bled, day after day after day. “You’re in Detroit, with Phichit. That’s better than waking up in a hotel somewhere, right? At least I have Phichit.”

_I don’t want Phichit; I want Victor!_ the treacherous little voice wailed, and Yuuri fought down a sudden hot surge of guilt. Phichit was his best friend, after all. It wasn’t like he was picking Victor over him—except he was and he would, again and again and again, but he didn’t need to be reminding himself of what an absolutely terrible friend he was and how he was disappointed to see the boy who had unconditionally supported him through his college career and how oh my god, Yuuri, you literally travelled through time like fucking Marty McFly and you’re crying and sniffling into your pillow instead of doing something about it could you get any more pathetic weak weak weak—

“Thank you for your opinion, mind,” he said firmly, lowering the pillow that had somehow found its way to his face. It was a strategy he’d learned from the therapist he’d finally gone to (read: Victor had made an appointment in his name and given him the patented Nikiforov Puppy Dog Eyes til he caved and agreed to go) to manage his anxiety. It had sounded incredibly stupid when proposed, but putting that distance between him and his thoughts helped a little and he breathed in properly for the first time in two minutes. “Okay. Okay.” _Not okay!_ his mind screamed. Yuuri shoved his tear grimy glasses back up the bridge of his nose and set his mouth. He could deal with this. He _would_ deal with this. His future with Victor might depend on it.

...his future with Victor. Which meant that, somehow, he had to figure out if (please, please, please) his husband had come back with him.

Thank god and a drunken Christophe Giacometti’s habit of changing people’s contact information to amusingly lewd but misleading emoji’s he’d actually memorized his phone number.

Taking another deep breath, he picked up the phone he’d dropped on the bed once his situation had registered, opened up a new message—and promptly threw it across the room as the door was flung open and a certain Thai skater burst in with a cry of “Emergency best friend breakfast meeting! My hottest skinny jeans—the Fuck-Me Jeans, okay, this is serious!—got ruined in the wash and we need to plan the funeral. Only the finest send off will do, Yuuri, those jeans got me laid more than pole dancing. This is a tragedy and I need sugar to deal with it. Come help me in the kitchen, I’m nearly done with the pancakes but I can’t find the syrup.”
“I...uh...” Yuuri stared blankly at his now empty hands, trying to process this turn of events in his already overloaded mind. He latched on to the first thing that made sense. “I...pancakes? Are you sure that’s in the diet plan?”

“I’m in mourning, Yuuri,” Phichit said, draping himself over the nearby desk chair.

Yuuri’s mouth trembled, a familiar warm pressure gathering around his eyes. “I...” he said again.

Phichit looked up, and then jumped to his feet. “Oh, shit, are you okay? I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to just burst in here like that—well, I did, but I didn’t think I’d freak you out that badly! Shit. Sorry.”

“No, no, it’s not you, it’s...” Yuuri waved a hand vaguely, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand. “It’s just a bad morning. I’ll be okay. Really.” He managed a brittle smile. “But pancakes do sound good.”

“Right,” Phichit said, standing to attention and throwing him a salute. Yuuri gave a watery laugh. “Pancakes it is. You can pet my hamsters, too, if you want. Just don’t let them get in the food again; I’m not having a repeat of the Mrs. Butterworth Incident of 2014.”

“My hair smelled like syrup for weeks,” Yuuri muttered, but he could feel his mind settling down. Phichit was a rose coloured Instagram filter on the moments he inhabited, and his incorrigible optimism, viral.

“And dozens of poor confused college students started having inexplicable wet dreams about breakfast,” Phichit said, snickering.

Yuuri threw his pillow at him.

After that, the “Emergency Best Friend Breakfast Meeting” was unavoidable, as Phichit set about on a mission to distract him from whatever had him so distraught. Thankfully (or maybe not) it was one of their rare off days, so at least he didn’t have to deal with practise on top of everything else. Yuuri was too distressed to properly appreciate the food and the company, but nevertheless grabbed onto the opportunity to put off the moment of truth—what if Victor didn’t remember? What if Yuuri was alone here, in the past? Clearly Phichit hadn’t come back, so why would anyone else, no matter how much he needed them to be here? No matter how terribly, achingly adrift he was without them. Yuuri without Victor was...still a whole person, but not one he ever wanted to be.

So he delayed, and delayed, alternating between staring blankly at the empty new message in his phone and throwing himself into increasingly aggressive games of Mario Kart with Phichit, fretting and clinging to the hazy fading hope that this was somehow a dream, that he’d wake up tomorrow morning with his Vitya’s arms around him and a tired, grey Makka snoring by their tangled feet. He should send a message. He knew he should. But to his anxious mind, the possibility of Victor still knowing him, still loving him, was momentarily preferable to the potential reality that he didn’t. And anyway, what would he even say? “Hi, Victor Nikiforov, four time world champion, I’m your husband from the future, human disaster Katsuki Yuuri! And apparently I can time travel and I really need to know if you can too.”

...yeah. Definitely not.

Then, as Phichit blue-shelled him for the third time that game, the decision was taken blessedly out of his hands, as his phone buzzed with a new notification and Yuuri nearly broke their crappy TV
throwing his controller aside to grab it.

**This is katsuki yuuri’s #, right?** It read. From the same number he’d input trembly in the ‘recipient’ line of his messaging app. **question? how would u feel about being yuuri katsuki-nikiforov?**

Yuuri stared for a long moment, blinking back tears, because that was such an incredibly Victor way of asking and he’d been so afraid and here was his husband—his husband—right and okay and remembering and suddenly the twisting leeching knot that had taken root in his chest the moment he’d woken up alone and disoriented loosened and he could breathe.

Victor was here. Victor remembered.

He exhaled shakily, drawing a long breath before typing his answer. Phichit, in the background, demanded a rematch.

**Vitya!!! i’m already mr. Katsuki-Nikiforov and i don’t intend on changing that**

I’m so glad you’re ok <3

The reply only took a few seconds to appear, and then Yuuri’s phone was inundated with a long string of messages.

**FROM: VITYA <3**

YUURRRRIIIIII!!!!!!! <3 <3 <3
i love you
so much
u don’t even know
im crying on makka rt now
i woke up and u weren’t here and my phone says its 2015??!
b4 sochi?
then i called yura and he screamed for a minute straight
and i couldn’t remember ur phone # and i had to get it from chris?
y did chris have ur phone # b4 me?! >_<
yuuriiii

Yuuri glanced over at Phichit before making a hasty excuse and escaping to his bedroom before he could be roped into another match. This was going to take a while, and he definitely didn’t want his roommate to see him sobbing in hysterical relief over his phone. That would raise questions he definitely wasn’t prepared to answer. Typing frantically, he flopped down on his bed, a stupid grin on his face and tears blurring his eyes.

**VITYA <3**

vitya its ok
we’re both here
we’re both ok
i don’t know what happened or why we’re back in 2015 but we came back together, and that’s the important thing, right?

Well not together exactly
Im booking a flight to japan as we speak

Vitya im in detroit
I mean don’t you dare fly out here yakov will go completely bald
The gp series starts in 2 weeks
We gotta skate still

I don’t care about the stupid gpf ill win anyway zolotse i wanna see u and kiss ur cute face
And ur cute ass ; )

omg vitya no you are not flying across the world for my ass
not again

ok but consider
that decision led directly 2 our wedding
and we’re in the past now?! So i can marry u again! Don’t u want 2 get married?

...you make a convincing argument

VITYA <3, UNKNOWN NUMBER

Hey assholes
Anyone want to tell me why its 2015 and i’m stuck back in my shitty 15 year old body?

VITYA<3: YURA!!!! :- ) : -) im so glad ur here too!!! The whole podium fam is back!!

Yura: yeah whatever. its good katsudon is here or youd have died of dehydration from crying so
much and i don’t want to deal with that gross shit

aw, thanks, Yura. I knew you loved us. : )

Yura: I love looking down at you from the top of the podium
Btw I guess you two idiots have been too busy sending sappy messages to each other to realize
that since weve still got our skating skills from all those years in the future and you two are still old
men even in the past im going to be completely owning gold for the next fifteen years
Suck it, nikiforov

That’s my line ; )

Yura: FUCK OFF KATSUDON NO ONE WANTS TO HEAR ABOUT HOW YOU WANT
THE OLD MAN TO SUCK YOUR DICK

VITYA<3: i do

Yura: NO

VITYA<3: ok ok
well discuss it in person when i get to detroit ; * <3 <3

Yura: YOU ARE NOT LEAVING ME HERE TO DEAL WITH YAKOV ALONE
HE NEARLY KILLED US ALL LAST TIME AND THAT WASN’T RIGHT BEFORE THE
FUCKING GPF!

VITYA <3: O no, i booked u a ticket 2
We can train at yuuri’s rink! Ill coach u both! Ill b fun!

I...don’t think Celestino will be thrilled with that
VITYA<3: Yuuri my love my star my life im victor katsuki-nikiforov
I have more gold medals than georgi has eye shadow palettes
I dont give a shit what he thinks

Vitya.

VITYA<3: hes a terrible coach for u and if we want to get married again u need to be on the
podium at the final
i only kiss gold, yuuri, this lip gloss is chanel

That seems like a waste, but ok
No kissing til i win

VITYA<3:...wait this was a bad idea i take it back

Yura:For fuck’s sake you two
We have the opportunity of a lifetime to mess with the entire figure skating world and break all
our records doing it and you’re bringing up this fucking argument again
We all know you’re going to throw yourselves at each other the minute you’re in the same room.
The real question is: how are we going to play this for maximum shock value?

You’re taking this very well, Yura

Yura: Well i can’t do anything about it, can i, katsudon? You’ve got to make the most of shit or
you drown in it
Now listen up geezers bc the ice tiger’s got a plan...

Yuuri stayed holed up in his room til the last rays of sun disappeared below the horizon, texting
with Victor and Yuri til they were available for a Skype call. Messaging was nice and all, but
something in Yuuri’s chest unclenched at the sight of his beaming husband waving delightedly at
him from their old couch, Makkachin nosing her head into the frame and Yuri slouched over the
back of the cushions.

He looked so young, Yuuri noted with a start. Objectively he had known, of course; five years is a
long time to scrub away, particularly for someone barely out of their teens, but to see it here right
in front of him was jarring in a way he wasn’t expecting.

Of course, he imagined it must have been much worse for Yura himself. At least he himself had
arrived back long after his last growth spurt.

They stayed on until Victor and Yuri were yawning more than talking—with the time difference it
was nearing midnight there and from what they’d told him they’d been at the rink all day being
hounded by Yakov as they wobbled and fell trying to readjust to their five-years-past bodies. It
was not their off days, and Yakov did not take excuses. Particularly not from his champion skaters
a mere fortnight out from the opening events of the season.

(“It’s okay, zolotse! I’d never sleep again if it meant I got to talk to you,” was Victor’s response to
his concern, which, while sweet, was not exactly encouraging. Yura just snorted and continued
scrolling through his phone, slumped bonelessly on Victor’s shoulder.)

Eventually though, exhaustion won out over sentiment and his husband waved an unhappy
goodbye with a promise to text as soon as he woke up. Yuuri waved back, blowing a kiss at the
screen before ending the call and sitting back in his chair, exhaling slowly.

Victor was ok. Yuri was ok. His husband was flying out to Detroit in two days (they weren’t in
any qualifying events together and no force on earth could convince Victor to wait for the final to see him, and to be honest Yuuri really hadn’t tried very hard. They’d never been good at being apart), ready to run roughshod over anybody who dared to suggest that the legendary Victor Nikiforov couldn’t or shouldn’t make an apparently insane decision to uproot everything to coach an unassuming Japanese skater all appearances suggested he’d never actually met. And if he was going to do it whilst simultaneously perfecting his own programs, well, genius had always kept a joint account with madness.

Yura, with a predatory grin that would have been unnerving if Yuuri hadn’t been rendered immune by long association, had opted to stay in St. Petersburg and force his way into the senior division a year early. (“Someone’s got to keep Yakov from killing Georgi,” he’d said reasonably. “And...I want to spend time with Grandpa. Before...”

They all heard what he left unsaid.

Before the cancer. Before the hospitals and machines and the bitter stink of antiseptic. Before Yura, standing like a brave little soldier in the muddy cemetery, mouth trembling and head held high as if his pride would be enough to patch the gaping hole in his heart.

It wasn’t. But Victor and Yuuri and Beka and Potya and Yakov and Lilia and Milla and Yuuko and piroshky and card games on the apartment floor and late night motorcycle rides for ice cream and leopard print blankets that smelled like home and a place where he was allowed to cry and scream and no one looked at him with pity or judgment or threw out platitudes like words could measure up to the things that were gone—

Well. Maybe that was enough to hold the edges together until they could scar.

Maybe this time around they wouldn’t have to.

They’d been given an unexpected gift of years to create the future they wanted, Yuuri considered, squinting at his phone screen and running a hand through hair that was much shorter than he remembered. It would be a terrible waste not to make the most of it.

And if part of that involved sending the skating world into repeated paroxysms of shock and incredulity, well, he wasn’t above admitting that he would enjoy the implosion. What could he say? He was a sucker for surprises. He’d married Victor, after all.

With that happy thought, he stepped out of his room and dropped down next to a drowsing Phichit on the couch.

“Hey,” he said. “I’m okay now. Sorry for worrying you,” he paused, smiling down at his friend. “I hope I didn’t miss the send off for the legendary Phichit Chulanont Fuck-Me Jeans?”

The Thai immediate popped up from where he was slumped against the cushioned arm, beaming. “Yuuri! My bestie, my bro, my one true wingman!” he chirped, pausing a moment to make sure the contact would be welcome before slinging an arm around his shoulders. “How could I say a proper goodbye without you?”
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Victor and Makkachin arrive in Detroit! Yurio is angry, Victuuri are giant dorks, and Phichit has had it up to here with their shit.

Contains super rare, mint edition Phichit POV and discourse about magical genie doubles.

Chapter Notes

You know, I tried to fast forward this a bit but these losers won’t stop being adorably in love.
I'm not even sorry.

And (Victor voice) wow! Amazing! I'm really blown away by all the response my cracky little story got literally overnight. You guys are the best. Seriously. Your comments and kudos are giving me life.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yuuri wasn’t a petty person. He wasn’t. (Somewhere out there, Mari sighed. Phichit raised a perfectly shaped eyebrow. Yuri Plisetsky swore incoherently and threw his skate guards across the rink.) Okay, so maybe sometimes he could be a little passive aggressive, and so maybe he held minor grudges just a bit too long, and so maybe Georgi really hadn’t deserved the lovingly curated mix tape of saccharine sweet love songs he’d left in his locker after the man had swiped the last homemade piroshky for the third time in a row.

But Yuuri wasn’t petty. Which is why when he suggested his idea for introducing Victor and Phichit, it was purely with a thought to the boost it would give his best friend’s social media accounts, and not a backhanded way of getting revenge for the latest cascade of embarrassing Katsuki Yuuri photos gracing Instagram.

“That’s savage, Katsudon,” Yura said once he’d shared with the younger skater, slurping the last dregs of his juice box like it had personally offended him. Yuuri wished he’d had the forethought to lower the volume on his phone. “I’m almost proud to be associated with you. Almost.”

“Thanks,” he said dryly, speaking Russian, as he had for their whole conversation. He was sitting on the bench in the locker room of the Detroit Skate Club, swigging water from his bottle and mentally congratulating himself for only falling six times that morning. Even if his body hadn’t changed half as much as Yura’s, he was still adjusting to his slightly altered centre of gravity. “I’ll send you the video when it happens. Right now, I’ve got to get back to practise before Celestino makes me do suicides.”

“Tcha, well, since your stupid husband didn’t bother to tell Yakov before he got on the plane this morning, he’s been trying to grind the rest of us into sausage,” Yura grouched. “My bruises have
bruises. This is your fault, pork cutlet. You better bring me food at Skate America. And pocky. The pink ones. None of that gross green tea shit.”

“Okay, Yura,” Yuuri said, smiling dreamily at the lockers. Victor was on his way to Detroit. Victor was going to be in his and Phichit’s ratty college apartment by tonight. Victor was going to be in his arms by tonight.

“You’d better not be doing that dopey lovesick smile thing, Katsudon,” Yura barked into the phone. “If you’re too busy mooning over your idiot husband to be decent competition I’m going to fly over there and kick both your asses.”

“Vitya inspires my skating,” Yuuri said, with utter conviction and a blush that wasn’t quite as intense as it once would have been.

“Oh my god, you’re fucking serious, aren’t you? I swear to—”

“Katsuki! Break was over five minutes ago! Get back on the ice and show me that quad toe loop again!”

“Bye, Yurio,” Yuuri said, grinning at the strangled shriek from the other end at the nickname before hanging up and tucking his phone back in his bag. “Coming, Coach!” he called. He knew Celestino would stop yelling once he pulled out the quad salchow he hadn’t mastered in the old timeline until Yuri’s begrudging lessons. Well, stop yelling in anger, anyway.

His Vitya was on his way back to him. Not even Celestino’s furious gesturing and mutters of “—up to here with skaters staring at their phones and acting like they don’t know when break ends” could dampen his joy.

Yuuri was usually the last to leave the rink, heading out long after the sun had dropped below the built-up horizon, but since Victor’s flight arrived at DTW around mid afternoon he’d arranged to take the morning practise slot and left early, citing an exam. Phichit gave him a high five and a resounding “good luck!” as he ran out the doors, and Yuuri almost regretted his intentions to throw him unprepared into the human whirlwind that was Victor Katsuki-Nikiforov. Then he remembered the video of himself drunk off his ass and dancing to Britney Spears in heels and booty shorts winking up at him from his Instagram, and all regret was gone.

He’d wanted to meet his husband at the airport, but timing and the reluctant acknowledgement that their reunions tended towards a degree of dramatics that a public unaware of their relationship was really not prepared for led to him pacing around the apartment, wearing grooves in the carpet with the directionless frenetic energy gifted only to the terminally anxious. He’d taken down his posters (“I can’t sleep with them looking at me, Yuuri. What if one comes to life in the night and replaces me? I’m not losing you to stationary!”), stocked up on black tea and jam (“Don’t look at me like that, lubov moya, you eat natto and that’s way grosser”), and somehow managed to smuggle a dog bed and Makkachin’s preferred brand of premium wet food (“Only the best for our sweet Makkaroni-chin!”) into his room without Phichit catching on. Now all he had to do was wait. Easy.

Right.

He’d been staring at the same line in his anatomy textbook for twenty minutes when a familiar bark sounded from somewhere outside, and he was off the couch and out the door before the echo
could make it back.

Yuuri was all dancer’s grace and quickness as he careened down the stairs towards Victor, lodestone to north star, jumping the landings and flowing around any and all obstacles in his path like a river on the way to its ocean, and he was all stuttering choked sobs and clinging limbs when they collided, tall, silver-haired Victor standing with his bags and dog on the Detroit pavement and Yuuri, falling into his arms like this was the inevitable answer to every question he’d never thought to ask.

“Vitya.”

“Yuuri.”

And for the first time since he’d woken up five years before he went to sleep, Yuuri felt like he was home.

They stood like that, clinging to one another in the late afternoon light, long after the taxi driver had snorted and peeled away from the curb and the frat boys across the road had grown tired of whistling and retreated inside, and they might have lingered forever in the moment if Makkachin had not decided that she too wanted to be part of the hug and tackled them both.

Victor yelped, giving a sharp “Ah—Makka! Down! No!” and immediately contradicting his own orders by bending down and scooping the poodle up into his arms. “I know, baby,” he cooed, squishing a perfectly contented Makkachin between himself and Yuuri in a tight, awkward hug. “I missed your other papa too.”

“Technically she only just met me,” Yuuri managed, through a mouth full of poodle fur.

“She recognizes your soul, lubov moya,” Victor said gravely. “And of course, my undying and incandescent love for you.”

“Of course,” Yuuri said, not even trying to keep the helpless smile off his face.

Yuuri had been a little worried about how his Burberry jacket wearing, vintage Cadillac driving, casually extravagant husband would react to the very...uh, collegiate apartment he shared with Phichit, but, as always, Victor surprised him.

“Wow! Amazing!” he beamed, throwing himself on the Jigglypuff shaped bean bag chair that Yuuri and Phichit had somehow ended up with after an International Student meeting had gotten surprisingly wild. “It’s so cosy, solnyshko!”

Yuuri scuffed his feet on the carpet. “I know it’s not as nice as our flat in St. Petersburg...” he said, setting one of Victor’s Louis Vuitton suitcases next to the carefully buttressed stack of mismatched boxes that served as a coffee table and wondering how this had become his life.

“But my Yuuri isn’t in St. Petersburg,” Victor said, as if this was the blindingly obvious counterargument to any objections anyone might have to the situation. “You’re here. So obviously it’s the nicest place I could be.”

Yuuri hastily ducked down and buried his face in Makka’s soft fur to hide the fact that he’d suddenly gone the colour of a ripe tomato. Three years of marriage and he still hadn’t managed to get used to his husband’s tendency to just blurt out whatever embarrassingly romantic nonsense
popped into his head. “Victoooor.”

“What? I mean it.”

“I know, it’s just...” he peeked up from behind Makka, a sly grin suddenly appearing on his face. “If you keep saying that sort of thing we’re going end up with a lot fewer clothes and a lot more embarrassing blackmail photos when Phichit comes home from the rink and finds us.”

Victor leaned forward, eyes dark. “I’m more than okay with that.”

“Well, I’m not.” He grinned, and then darted forward to plant a quick kiss on his husband’s very distracting mouth before moving away. Said Russian gave a quiet whine and tried futilely to pull him back.

“Rejected by my own husband,” he declared, once it was clear he wouldn’t win this round, flopping forward to lie on the floor like the absolute drama queen he was. “After I flew across the world to see him. I am heartbroken. I may not survive. Amend my will; I leave everything to Makkachin.”

Yuuri giggled. “Even the Christian Lacroix ties?”

“Especially the ties.”

“She’ll be the best dressed pall-dog at the funeral,” Yuuri promised gravely, before collapsing into fits of helpless, bubbling laughter. He’d missed Victor’s dramatics. He’d missed Victor. They’d texted, the days they’d been apart, but it wasn’t the same.

His husband giggled along with him, before his amusement turned into a long series of yawns.

“Aww, my Vitya,” Yuuri said, stroking his back. “You’ve been travelling for nearly a whole day. Go take a shower and lie down, and I’ll get everything sorted, yeah? Phichit won’t be back for another half hour.”

At his mumbled agreement, Yuuri pulled him to his feet and guided him towards the cramped bathroom, showing him the trick to getting hot water and gently rebuffing the sleepy attempts to convince him to join. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to enjoy the results of a naked and affectionate Victor, but Makka really did need feeding and he really didn’t need the teasing that would ensue if Phichit came home to find them showering together.

There’d be plenty of time for that later, anyway.

He was lying on the sofa, scrolling idly through Twitter and trying to ignore the faint twinge in his leg from too many hard landings on the ice, when Victor shuffled out into the living room in a pair of grey sweats and one of Yuuri’s slightly too small shirts riding up his stomach to reveal a strip of pale, toned skin. This was all he had a chance to register, before Victor reached the sofa and threw himself on top of him.

“Yuuuuri.” He rolled the vowels like a caress, shifting and wriggling around until their bodies were as tangled together as their heartbeats. The faint scent of Yuuri’s strawberry shampoo lingered in his hair. “I missed you.”

“I missed Makkachin,” Yuuri said dreamily, fingers reaching up to run through the silky silver strands like it was the foregone conclusion of every decision he’d ever made. On the floor beside them, their poodle gave a soft ‘boof’ of recognition at her name and went back to sleep. “How do
people live without dogs? They’re so good.”

“Yuuuri,” Victor whined, nipping sharply at his exposed collarbone.

Yuuri made a noise he definitely hoped no one else ever heard, and then sighed and tugged gently on the Russian man’s hair until he looked up, his blue eyes more ocean than ice in the lamp light. “I missed you,” he said, soft as butterfly wings but a thousand times more lasting. “I love you. And regardless of what timeline we happen to be in, I’ll stay close to you as long as you’ll have me.”

Victor buried his face in Yuuri’s shoulder with a sigh of contentment. “Forever,” he mumbled, voice muffled by his shirt. “Stay close to me forever.”

“Nope,” Yuuri whispered, nuzzling his hair. “Forever.”

They were still lying tangled up on the couch, Victor fast asleep and Yuuri well on his way there, when the sound of someone chattering in quick Thai in the street below heralded the arrival of the one and only Phichit Chulanont. Grasping vaguely at where he thought his phone had fallen, Yuuri grinned as his fingers closed around the plastic case and lifted it to his face, thumbing his way to the camera app. Petting Victor’s drowsing head almost absently with his free hand, he adjusted his glasses, pushed his hair back, and hit record.

“Hey, ladies, gentlemen, and ice tigers,” he said, flashing the screen his very best Eros smirk. You don’t live with the local social media god for four years and not pick up a thing or two, after all. “I’m Katsuki Yuuri, JSF certified figure skater. And this jetlagged dork—” he panned the camera down to Victor’s sleeping face. Of course, even with his hair mussed, mouth open and drooling slightly on Yuuri’s shirt, he still managed to look like a damn Caravaggio. It was a mystery he’d long ago given up any hope of solving. “—is my close friend and new coach, Victor Nikiforov, four time World Champion, living legend of figure skating, and apparently an incurable sleep cuddler. Word of advice: don’t let your friends watch nature documentaries after an international flight if you don’t want to be turned into a human pillow.” He turned his head slightly as the sound of footsteps and off-key humming outside drew near to their apartment door, lowering his voice slightly and picking up the pace a touch. “And that outside is my best friend and flatmate, Phichit Chulanont, who I’m sure you all know as a legendary purveyor of selfies and primo hamster content, who also has absolutely no idea that a) Victor and I are friends b) that he’s flown out here to coach me this season.” He laid a finger over his lips and flashed the camera his best wink, a mimic of his husband’s signature playboy charm tempered by the big eyes and near permanent faint blush Phichit insisted on referring to as the ‘Cutesuki effect’.

That was #11 on Yuuri’s private list of Reasons Why I Am Not Sorry For Being a (not) Petty Asshole.

It was a long list.

When Phichit bounded into the apartment with a resounding “Shall we skaaaaate!” delivered in what he knew was an excellent falsetto, he expected to be greeted with a tired Yuuri stress eating his worries away with all the soy ice cream in the freezer he determinedly insisted wasn’t his. (Phichit let him maintain his dignity. College was hard enough without an anxiety disorder and a professional figure skating career hanging over one’s head; there was no reason to make it worse.)

Instead of that familiar scene, however, he was met with the sight of his best friend contentedly
cuddling a sleeping Victor Nikiforov on their living room couch.

He blinked. Katsuki Yuuri. Official #1 Nikiforov Trash, living expert on the subject of How To Ruin Everything Forever When Confronted by Cute Boys (drink everything in sight, pole dance into their pants and hearts, and vanish into the night like a beautiful stripper vigilante), and notorious nervous crier. Cuddling Victor Nikiforov. Contentedly. On their couch.

The little shit was even looking at his phone, like this was just an everyday occurrence and not a sign of the coming apocalypse.

Maybe he was dreaming? This seemed like the sort of mildly unsettling surrealism a mind stewing in unconscious worries about his upcoming Senior debut would come up with.

Phichit pinched himself. Hard.

Nope. Definitely not a dream.

“Katsuki Yuuri,” he hissed, closing the door carefully behind him and crossing on light feet to the end of the couch. “What the fuck.” And then, because this didn’t really seem sufficient to express his disbelief at the situation, added in a slightly firmer tone, “What the actual fucking fuck?”

“Oh, hey Phichit,” Yuuri said, looking up from his phone. Victor Nikiforov (!) muttered something in his sleep in thick Russian and nuzzled into his shoulder. “I bought milk.”

Phichit revised his earlier impression. There was no way this was actually Yuuri. Or Victor Nikiforov. Or any combination of those two whatsoever. Because the Ice-Cold Living Legend didn’t go around sleepily snuggling with his biggest fan with a dopey smile on his face (although he should, because said fan was amazing and he deserved to bone the man of his dreams, god damn it), and if he did, Certified Anxious Wreck Katsuki Yuuri would be losing his fucking mind and not casually blinking up at him and talking about groceries.

Logically, there was only one way this could have happened.

“You sneaky little bastard,” Phichit said, jabbing an accusing finger at Yuuri. “That weird old rummage sale teapot did have a genie in it. And you wasted our wishes on Victor doubles!”

His hand, phone permanently attached, flashed up on subconscious instinct to snap a photo of Yuuri’s face in that moment. It was a perfect shot, and it was going in the Katsuki Yuuri Blackmail Folder.

“What—no! Where did you even—”

“Eh?” Definitely-Not-the-Real-Nikiforov mumbled, eyes fluttering open and squinting in his direction. His voice was rough with sleep, accent syrup-thick and guttural. “Me doubles? Oh! Solnyshko, did Chris and I ever tell you that story? The one with the Norwegian twins and the lutefisk and that terrible game of strip monopoly?”

“Repeatedly,” Yuuri said, looking defeated.

“I haven’t heard it,” Phichit said hopefully, instinct for juicy gossip overcoming his doubt about the situation.

“It’s a very good story,” the man said, turning around slightly so he could look at Phichit. The uselessly detail oriented part of his mind made a careful note: Nikiforov’s eyes in real life (was this real life?) were a much more unbelievable shade of blue than in Yuuri’s posters. “Although Chris tells it better. He was there for more of it, you see—I left before the whole sauna business, and—”
“Okay, okay!” Yuuri cut in, clamping a hand over Nikiforov’s mouth. “The internet does not need to hear about any more of Chris Giacometti’s sexcapades.”

Phichit processed this for a few moments, and then suddenly broke out in a megawatt smile. “Yuuri!” he said, feeling a sudden burst of almost paternal pride. “Are you filming this?”

“Well, I was,” his friend muttered, sighing and setting his phone face down on the table with a sharp click.

“He was,” Nikiforov—and he was beginning to suspect it might be the real one, although how that had happened was another question entirely—confirmed. “You were supposed to wake me up, though, Yuuri! How could you? I almost missed the fun!”

Here his mind took down another meticulous note: Victor Nikiforov—champion figure skater and voted “The Hottest Man in the World” on six separate occasions—was an actual, honest-to-god child.

Suddenly this whole situation was a lot more believable.

Yuuri sighed again, a bone-deep, weary sigh, like the entire universe had conspired to disappoint him and he couldn’t even be surprised about it. “The funniest part was Phichit accusing me of stealing his genie wishes,” he said, looking down at the man curled up around him with a fond expression that contained far less of the fanatical adoration Phichit had expected and far more of what, he realized with the growing sense that he had missed something terribly important, looked to be actual, genuine love. “And I know you heard that. Anyway, you can watch the video later.”

“Right, that’s great and all,” Phichit interrupted, staring pointedly at his friend until he looked back up at him. “But I’m pretty sure Victor fucking Nikiforov didn’t fly all the way from St. Petersburg right before the season’s opening events just to make a prank video with you. No offense, Yuuri, but you aren’t that cool.”

“I’m coaching him this season!” Victor said brightly.

Phichit blinked. “You’re what now?”

“Coaching him! And competing, of course! Oh, and I guess we’re getting married, too.” He turned to Yuuri, looking suddenly very guilty. “Oops. I wasn’t supposed to say that part, was I?”

“No, Vitya, you weren’t. Because we’re not getting married until you win me another gold,” Yuuri said, with the shit-eating grin that Phichit knew way too well and never thought he’d see directed at his friend’s lifelong idol and not-so-secret big gay crush.


Whatever that meant.

“Fair’s fair,” Yuuri said, smiling like the perfect little angel he wasn’t. His expression took on a slightly worried tinge. “But, ah, please don’t tell anyone about our relationship, okay, Phichit? When we’re ready to make it public, we’ll tell you first so you can break the news.”

“Okay, you’re kidding me, right? This is another prank.” He was beginning to suspect, which a creeping sense of horror, that it wasn’t. “I mean, literally just last week you, Katsuki Yuuri, were crying on my hamsters because ‘Victor is just so beautiful oh my god Phichit you don’t understand’ and telling me how you wished you were an ice rink so he could skate on your ass.”
“PHICHIT!” Yuuri shrieked, turning the exact shade of his favourite lipstick (Russian Red. Of course.) and trying to hide behind Victor’s shoulder.

Victor. Who he suddenly realized was wearing one of Yuuri’s old dance team shirts.

Holy shit.

“I never said that and you know it!” Yuuri was whining, voice slightly muffled by his taller—boyfriend? Coach? Fiancé?

Phichit completely gave up on trying to understand the situation and just smirked. “I know. I was just reminding you why you should never mess with your best friend. You know, the social media master who knows all your actual secrets?”

(Apparently not, but never mind.)

“I would never skate on your ass anyway, zolotse,” Victor added, almost dreamily. “It’d be defacing a national treasure.”

“Why can’t I have just one conversation where I don’t want to die from embarrassment?” Yuuri whined.

“Karma,” Phichit said wisely, and went to pull his emergency bottle of cheap vodka from the freezer.

He was definitely going to need it.

Chapter End Notes

I didn't forget about Makkachin, I promise! She's just gone to sleep under the kitchen table where Phichit can't see her.
Obligatory reaction/social media chapter, because I love them.

Saved in my files as "Everybody Reacts to Victor's Poor Life Choices"

Featuring conspiracy theories, cryptic photography, and a surprise Mari

So I should probably state that I have neither a twitter or an Instagram and have literally never posted from my tumbr account. So as far as formatting goes...I tried.

Over a 100 kudos?! WHAT?!!! : ) Ya'll's feedback is making my day!!! I read every word. And if anyone has anything they'd really like to see from this fic, feel free to let me know! I don't have a concrete plan in place, so the possibilities, much like the timestream and Georgi's well of angst, are endless.

Has Russia’s Figure Skating Legend Finally Lost his Touch?
Rumours are swirling in regards to figure skating superstar Victor Nikiforov’s sudden departure from St. Petersburg just two weeks out from the opening events of the season, on top of rinkmate Yuri Plisetsky’s sudden announcement that he will be moving up to the Senior division early. Our sources have been unable to determine just where or why the so-called Living Legend has absconded, although his coach, the renowned Yakov Feltsman, has refused to comment except to state that Nikiforov will continue to skate his events as scheduled. Unsurprisingly, conspiracy theories abound. Could it be a secret elopement? A life-threatening illness? Something even more sinister? Distressed fans have caused a global phenomenon with the hashtag #wheredidvictorgo, but the famed skater remains elusive, posting only an obscure photo of some kind of coconut milk soup sitting on a sunlit table. A pair of hello kitty chopsticks can be seen reaching in from out of the frame, which has fuelled speculation that...

hamster-hats @skateskateskate
@v-nikiforov pls come back! #wheredidvictorgo

yuri piroshky @yoyopotato
Legend has it that if you hold a plushie poodle and chant “gold medal sweep” three times while doing a triple axel, @v-nikiforov will (1/2)

yuri piroshky @yoyopotato
emerge from the ice and blind you with his perfect hair #wheredidvictorgo (2/2)
Vityas Future Wife @muffingirl
@yoyopotato don’t be a dick! Alot of us fans are rly upset about this! #wheredidvictorgo

victor niliforv @skaterbuoy
GUYs, GUYs!! My cousin is a skater at Yubileny rink and she says @v-nikiforov ran off to coach some guy named yuri #wheredidvictorgo

victor niliforv @skaterbuoy
Apparently Feltzman has been screaming about it nonstop for days #wheredidvictorgo

victor niliforv @skaterbuoy
And remember, his rinkmate *Yuri* Plisetsky is also called the ice tiger of Russia and is obsessed with cats. The hello kitty chopsticks, anyone?

crispiNO @mygirlmila
@skaterbuoy plisetsky? The junior gold medallist? No fucking way. He’s too good. Victor wouldn’t coach his replacement. It’s probably some new skater he found.

Vityas Future Wife @muffingirl
@mygirlmila bitch no one can replace Victor Nikforov

crispiNO @mygirlmila
@muffingirl lol says you

hothothot @voiceofreason
Guys, @icetigerofrussia trains at Yubileny already. Why would @v-nikiforov leave St. Petersburg to teach him? #wheredidvictorgo @skaterbuoy @mygirlmila @muffingirl (1/2)

hothothot @voiceofreason
And anyway, that doesn’t explain the soup. It’s tom kha kai, that’s a Thai dish. (2/2)

I love poodles @floofnoos
Phichit Chulanont is Thai?!!!! #wheredidvictorgo @voiceofreason @skaterbuoy @mygirlmila @phichit+chu

Phichit Chulanont@phichit+chu
@floofnoos I don’t own a pair of hello kitty chopsticks, though : ) #wheredidvictorgo

Yuri Plisetsky @icetigerofrussia
@phichit+chu but we all know who does #wheredidvictorgo

Christophe Giacometti @chris-gc
@icetigerofrussia (☪ ͡° ͜ʖ ͡°) #wheredidvictorgo

hamster-hats @skateskateskate
!!!! Do @icetigerofrussia and @chris-gc know something? #wheredidvictorgo

Yuri Plisetsky @icetigerofrussia
@skateskateskate yep DATES!!! #wheredidvictorgo

Christophe Giacometti @chris-gc
@skateskateskate yep ; ) #wheredidvictorgo
Victor bb, this whole thing wouldn’t happen to have anything to do with you frantically calling me a few days ago and asking for Yuuri Katsuki’s number, would it?

...y would u think that?

No reason. Besides dem thicc thicc thighs (°_3°)
I expect a full report at the Trophee de France.

CHRIIS

ice-ice-baby reblogged sirdanksalot

no1katsukifan

Ok guys, hear me out.
So you know how the skating world’s all in a tizzy because of VicNik’s mysterious disappearance from the scene and subsequent teasing Instagram post?
And how someone posted that according to gossip at Nikiforov’s old rink, he dropped off the grid to train someone named Yuri? Everyone seems to think that this means his rinkmate Yuri Plisetsky, who people are already calling his successor, or some unknown skater that he spotted training somewhere and was completely blown away by (mostly by people who forget that feel good sports movies are not real life).

But guys. There’s another Yuri in the figure skating world. A very talented and unreasonably beautiful, if inconsistent, skater. Seriously, look at these step sequences. Tell me these aren’t better than Nikiforov’s. I’ll wait.

Now, you’re asking me, if this guy is so good, why’s he not sweeping medals left and right? Well, I’ll leave off the specifics of why, but the fact is that our precious cinnamon son Yuuri Katsuki, despite dancing on the ice like a goddamn angel, has a tendency to flub his jumps more than your average skater. And I think Victor Nikiforov noticed that, too.

That’s right, everybody. I think that if the Victor Nikiforov decided to take off right before the season started, it wasn’t for Plisetsky, who’s already training with him anyway, or some total unknown. It was because we saw our very own Yuuri Katsuki at last year’s Skate Canada, where they both competed, and decided that he needed our boy to be skating at his full potential. After all, I think Nikiforov is getting bored with effortlessly winning all the time. I mean, look at his face in these medal ceremonies. That does not look like a man who’s enjoying himself.

And the kicker of all of this? Yuuri Katsuki is Japanese. And he lives and trains with Phichit Chulanont. Who’s from Thailand.

Tom Kha Kai and Hello Kitty chopsticks, anyone?
dead-girl-walking

holy shit

---

borschtborschtborscht

I'mao victor’s not going to jeopardize his season for a loser like katsuki. he’s probably just run off to party it up with chris g and this whole thing is a distraction to protect his reputation

---

lovexlifexhamsters

i don’t know, phichit chulanont *has* been suspiciously quiet on social media lately. And that boy posts updates in his sleep.
But still. It’s pretty far out there as far as theories go.

Source: no1katsukifan #wow #this is...surprisingly convincing #i’m torn #but also... #why didn’t anyone tell me katsuki was that hot omg #like damn boi #give that ass a gold medal #wheredidvictorgo

YAKOV!

Vitya. Just tell the media what you are doing, or i will.
It is a circus around here and I have skaters who actually take their careers seriously to worry about.

ugh fine

---

v-nikiforov

[Image: Victor and Yuuri, dressed in warm-up gear, flashing peace signs at the camera and beaming. Behind them, Phichit Chulanont can be seen skating backwards across the ice and grinning like a lunatic at a very put out looking Celestino Cialdini]

100.5 k likes
First practice with my adorable student! <3
#katsudon-y #phichit+chu #wheredidvictorgo #thegreatreveal #coachandcompetitor #betyoudidntevenknowwewerefriends

dancingqueen42 HOLY SHIT

tripledouble That one guy on tumblr we all made fun of was right. I’m dying.

minako-okukawa @katsudon-y you’d best explain right now or I’m sending your fan club the video of your first dance recital.

katsudon-y Minako-sensei, no! I’ll call as soon as I get back from practice, I promise!
v-nikiforov @minako-okukawa i will give you literally anything for that video

YuuriKatsukiisThighs VICTOR NIKIFOROV IS COACHING YUURI-CHAN?!!! AND THEY’RE FRIENDS?!!! *incoherent screaming*

yuri-plisetsky quit taking selfies and get back to training, old man. I need Katsudon in top form if I’m going to beat both of you fair and square.

phichit+chu

[image: Victor and Yuuri standing on the ice at a rink, Victor mid gesture as if demonstrating something and Yuuri looking intensely focused]

43k likes
The truth comes out! He’s here coaching my precious cinnamon roll Yuuri Katsuki!
#katsudon-y #v-nikiforov #wheredidvictorgo #thegreatreveal #gpfsurprise #breaktheinternet #ishipit

[video]

Katsuki Yuuri and Victor Nikiforov Surprise Phichit Chulanont (and all of us) with Coaching Reveal

545, 321 views

sk8rboi l8rboi

“who has absolutely no idea that Victor and I are friends”

YEAH US NEITHER KATSUKI

WE’VE ALL SEEN THE INFAMOUS COMPLIATION OF “YUURI CRIES OVER VICTOR NIKIFOROV’S PERFECT FACE”
(thank our lord and saviour phichit ur doing god’s work)

azurath metrion zinthos

I love how Phichit immediately jumps to “this is the work of evil mystic forces and you didn’t invite me”. The hero we all deserve.

FranktheHumanBoy96

this is the gayest thing i’ve ever seen and i’ve watched christophe giacometti’s routines

SuddenInevitableBetrayal

Two guys can cuddle without it being gay, you muppet. Dude probably just fell asleep on the nearest person; it’s like a 15 hour trip from Russia to Detroit.
yoyowhoa
Yeah, no, they’re so gay for each other #ishipit #victuuri

SuddenInevitableBetrayal

Stop imposing your heteronormative fetishizing bullshit on everyone, they’re just friends.

yoyowhoa

So. Gay.

This season’s gonna be amazing.

Mari nee-chan

Hey little bro, I want tickets to KAT-TUN, so I’m selling all your Victor merchandise. Since you’ve got the real thing and all now.

NEE CHAN DON’T YOU DARE

Chapter End Notes

Don’t worry, we'll be back to our boys next chapter. Plus more Yuri Plisetsky!
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Some angry kitten POV, the story of how Victor convinced Celestino to let him be Yuuri’s coach (spoiler, he didn’t), pair skating, and Makkachin.

Chapter Notes

Sorry the updates slowed; welcome to the wonderful world of schizoaffective bipolar, leave your stability and sleep schedule the door.

But! Writing is my healthy coping mechanism, so buckle up for the next chapter and enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Yuri Plisetsky, Russian Fairy, Ice Tiger, and connoisseur of fine animal print fabrics, shovelled borscht into his mouth and reflected that, yet again, his spotlight had been stolen by a fucking bowl of food.

Seriously. Couldn’t the old man have waited one day after Yuri’s own announcement of an unprecedented early entrance to the Senior Division before posting that fucking photo and starting an international manhunt?

He deserved at least some recognition for weathering Yakov’s Vesuvius impression long enough to slide that insane little idea through.

He was tempted to call Katsudon and bitch to him about his attention whore of a husband, but knowing Mr and Mr Co-Dependency it was just as likely that Victor would answer the phone. They’d only been apart for two days, but apparently that was enough to trigger the old man’s latent limpet DNA.

Yuri often wondered what kind of unholy cosmic accident had produced Victor Nikiforov. And if he could sue the universe for emotional distress.

It wasn’t even that he disliked him. He never had, not really, despite any number of teenage tantrums to the contrary. But Jesus Christ he was an annoying little shit when he wanted to be.

He shoved another spoonful into his mouth with slightly more aggression than he actually felt—best to keep up the appearance of fifteen year old ball of irrational rage, even if he was actually a twenty year old ball of completely reasonable and justified rage. Mila had already called him out for smiling at a photo of Phichit Chulanont’s hamsters. (What? They were cute. And wearing tiny crowns. Tiny crowns.)

Although, to be fair, Mila, past or future, wasn’t happy unless she was teasing him for something. “Aw. Little Yura’s sulking again.”
And speak of the devil.

“I am not little, hag.”

Mila plopped down in the seat opposite him in the largely empty rink canteen. “Don’t make me poll twitter again.”

Yuri made a noise like a cat dropped in a full bathtub, and slammed his spoon down in his bowl to cover it up. “The internet’s too busy salivating over the old man’s mind games to pay any attention to anything else.”

“Oh, is that what’s got you all pouty? Victor stealing your limelight again?”

“No.” Yuri said, with all the dignity he could muster. And it was even kind of true. Competitive little shit he might be, but he was enjoying the hysteria Victor’s posts had produced. He’d even gotten in on the speculation. (He was particularly proud of the response he’d gotten to his lengthy manifesto—complete with diagrams—asserting that all this was, in fact, the product of a complex love quadrangle between the old man, Katsudon, Seung-gil Lee, and Michele Crispino. The readers of his secret Katsuki appreciation blog had rioted. He’d stored some of the insults for later use.) “Yakov won’t let me put a quad loop in my short program.”

“You’ve literally never landed a quad loop.”

Yuri stood up, a very dangerous grin turning up the corners of his mouth as he set his food aside and began walking back to the rink. “Watch me, hag.”

She watched. He landed the loop.

Then again.

Again.

Again.

Later that day, Yakov came back with the revised choreography for his programs, and a small, sharp smile on his face.

*I’m proud of you*, it said. *Now go win gold.*

Yuri fully intended to.

...As long as Katsudon didn’t pull out that fucking quad axel, that was.

Yuuri squinted across the rink, at the handful of junior skaters Celestino was trying to coral off the ice before their practice. Thankfully, the initial furore over the presence of the living legend in their midst had died down a fair bit since his dramatic arrival and subsequent conversation with Celestino (one of the pair skaters swore you could still hear the Italian coach’s scream of disbelief echoing off the office walls; the juniors spoke in hushed whispers of how “Ciao Ciao called
Nikiforov an arrogant child unfit to teach a dog, and Yuuri Katsuki did nine flawless quad flips in a row with The Look on his face before going into a rant about Nikiforov’s perfectly trained poodle.”

“Never insult Nikiforov in front of Katsuki,” one rising talent said wisely. “Everyone knows that.”

“Poor old Tim Jenkins,” another sighed, eyes distant. “Do you think he’ll ever come back from Venezuela?”

Honestly, Yuuri wasn’t really surprised that Victor and Celestino had gotten off to an explosive start. They were both loud, opinionated, and frequently tactless, and despite his struggles with nerves, Yuuri was the best skater in Detroit. Well, he and Phichit. And that new kid was pretty good, Jackson what’s-his-face with the incredible combination spins...

Well, regardless, Ciao Ciao hadn’t wanted to give him up to some Russian he knew only in the context of watching him win consistently over his own students.

What had surprised Yuuri was how quickly the whole thing was solved when Victor had brought Makkachin to the rink.

(“I have to stand up for our dog’s honour, zolotse. She is a perfect angel and even that Italian and his stupid ponytail will have to admit it!” “Vitya, you used to have a ponyta—” “He insulted our child, Yuuri! Our sweet little Makka-latte! We must defend her.” “...Ok, babe. Makka can come to practice. But you’re picking up after her.”

“So. Domestic.” Phichit whispered, camera clicking madly.)

As it turned out, Celestino loved dogs. And Yuuri would be the fastest to admit that Makkachin was—no question—the second best dog in the world.

(The first, of course, was Vicchan, blessedly safe and alive in Hasetsu. And his namesake would never have to know that his first phone call in their new timeline had been not to him, but to Mari, to hear the happy little bark in the phone, easing half a decade of grief and guilt he hadn’t known he’d still been holding, and leave an urgent insistence that Vicchan never be let outside the onsen off his leash.

And if he’d sobbed a whole season of tears in the comforting darkness of his room after hanging up, so, so thankful for the chance to do this right and give his childhood best friend the life he’d deserved—well, that was between him and his silently accepting poodle plushie.)

“Alright,” Celestino had finally conceded, nodding at Victor before turning back to rub Makka’s soft tummy with a gentle cooing noise Yuuri hadn’t imagined he’d ever hear coming out of his feisty ex-coach’s mouth. The poodle wiggled happily. “If both of you want this, I won’t fight you. You can have Yuuri’s coaching contract. And I’ll get you in touch with the owners to arrange rink time. But...”

“Yes?” Victor prompted, looking uncharacteristically anxious.

“...Makkachin has to come to the rink too. Minimum three times a week. For at least an hour.” He leaned down to scratch her ears, beaming. “Who’s the best girl? Is it Makka? It is! Do you want a treat? Do you?”

Makka sat up, wagging enthusiastically.

“Oh my god,” Victor whispered. “Yuuri, our child has been lured into a life of sin by a sweet-talking Italian. My worst nightmare has come to pass. We’ve failed as parents.”
“Don’t worry, Vitya,” Yuuri said, patting his shoulder and stifling a giggle. “We’ve still got Yura.”

Victor’s only response was to sink slowly down on the bleachers, staring straight ahead as though he’d just watched the heat death of the universe.

Makkachin gazed at him for a moment, and then trotted away after Celestino, licking biscuit crumbs off her nose.

“Failed,” Victor repeated.

Makka became something of a mascot at the Detroit Skate Club, watching practices from the cozy dog bed someone had placed in a warm corner of the bleachers and gnawing happily on the toys and bones that kept mysterious appearing for her. Everyone denied responsibility for the gifts; everyone also, at some point, found themselves creeping into the rink to tuck a ball or extra pillow into her little nest.

Celestino credited her sole presence with keeping his blood pressure within normal limits, an impressive feat in the face of the onslaught of reporters that had camped outside the rink once Victor’s presence became known, and, of course, of Victor himself.

His husband, Yuuri admitted, could be a lot.

(When he mentioned this, Phichit laughed for a minute straight before gasping, “Yuuri, we’ve been dealing with you for three years. We can handle it.”

He wasn’t entirely sure how he felt about that.)

And, of course, because Victor was a lot and incredible and, well, Victor, their rink time tended to attract spectators. Which was how he found himself in practice now, frowning at the excited gaggle of younger skaters across the rink before turning to watch Victor run through his Free Program for the season.

Folding his arms and leaning against the boards, Yuuri watched him dip like a willow branch into Stammi Vicino (solo) with a critical eye.

It was gorgeous. Impossible. Breathtaking. Of course it was.

But...

“You keep hesitating during the choreographic sequences,” he said a few minutes later, when Victor dropped the ending pose and skated back over to him. “I mean, not hesitating, but...”

Taking a swig of water, Victor tilted his head, brow creasing slightly. Yuuri resisted the sudden urge to reach up and brush the sweat-sticky bangs out of his face.

Waving his hands aimlessly as if he could pluck the right description from the chilly air, he bit his lip and went on, “It’s like you’re about to turn one direction and then you don’t, but there’s no pause? It’s like a controlled fall. Like...” Abandoning words for their true shared language, action blessedly free of miscommunication and uncertainty, he made a sharp, graceful movement that brought him around behind his husband.

“Oh!” Victor said, expression clearing. “You mean the—” He shifted his feet suddenly, upper body held in place like some unseen force had him in its grasp.
“Yes,” Yuuri said, relieved.

Impossibly blue eyes raked over his face as if searching for something. “You don’t like it?”

“No, no! It’s...good. It fits. Like—I don’t know, like the thing you’re longing for is—like that thing has a pull and you can’t help but be drawn to it no matter how you—how...well.” He rubbed the back of his neck, feeling his face heat as he struggled to explain. “I’m not making much sense, am I? It just surprised me, that’s all. You never skated the program that way before. You know. Last time.”

Victor stared at him for a long moment, before his face suddenly broke out in that ridiculous heart-shaped grin. “I surprised you?”

“Of course. You always surprise me,” Yuuri said without thinking, and then regretted it immediately as Victor seized his waist with a delighted “Yuuuuri! Up!” and twirled him into a lift.

He yelped, instinctively tightening his core and grabbing the taller man’s shoulders as he brought them further out onto the ice. He really shouldn’t have been surprised—ever since they’d learned lifts for their pair skate, Victor had taken to picking him up at every opportunity. On ice, off ice, it didn’t really matter; if Yuuri let his guard down for one moment eager hands would close around his waist and he would be unceremoniously plucked off his feet.

Though it was hard to be upset when Victor was beaming up at him, looking like a man who’d been given a whole fairytale’s worth of wishes and happy endings and couldn’t fathom how he got so lucky.

“If you keep smiling at me like that people really are going to think this whole thing is about your giant embarrassing crush on me,” he said, trying and failing to repress a grin.

Victor glided them backwards for a few more seconds, before setting him carefully back down on the ice and blowing a loud raspberry.

“Wow. What a model coach,” Yuuri said.

“I’m not coaching right now,” Victor replied, with dignity, skating in slow circles. “I’m practicing my programs. If you want to get technical, you’re the one who’s being a bad coach. Since you’re supposed to be critiquing my free skate.”

Yuuri blinked. “That’s a great idea.”

“What, critiquing my free skate? I know. I suggested it.”

“No. Me being your coach.” He caught Victor’s startled look and turned slowly red. “I mean, Yakov’s not here and you know how bad he is with technology, and I’ve been helping coach Yura and Minami for a few seasons already, so it’s not like I’m completely unprepared for the job—and I mean, we know it can be done because you did it, and we’ll be at each other’s competitions anyway, so...” he trailed off, staring down at his skates as though they were the most interesting things he’d ever seen. “It was a stupid idea, never mind.”

He turned to skate away and let his embarrassment evaporate in the flashing edges of spins and step sequences.


He paused, peered up through his eyelashes. “Really?”
“Yes. Be my coach, my student, my competition, my everything. I can’t think of anyone else I’d want,” Victor said, and then burst into that familiar heart shaped grin, skating towards him with his arms spread. “Oh, zolotse, this is going to be the best season ever!”

“First rule of training, coach’s feet stay on the ice!” Yuuri shrieked, trying to dodge the inevitable lift.

“My feet are on the ice, Yuuri!” came the chirping reply, as he was caught and thrown unceremoniously into the air.

By the boards, Phichit scrolled through his filters before settling on a classic Valencia and hitting upload.

The likes flooded in.

**phichit+chu**

[image: A beaming Victor on the ice, lifting a Yuuri obviously trying very hard not to smile back. Their form is clearly practiced, but there’s an air of impulsive sweetness about it that’s incredibly appealing]

52k likes
Coach/Skater bonding time!! Wonder where they learned that one? : )
#katusdon-y #v-nikiforov #liftevictor #thatsonotinyourfreeskate #getyoucoachwhocandoboth #gpfsurprise #victuuri #detroitskateclub

**the-last-hairbender** what do i have to do to get me a man like v-nikiforov? seriously, satan, if you’re listening i’ve got a soul for sale, moderately tarnished and un-horcruxed. hmu

**lizard-bonnet** MY SKIN IS CLEAR MY CROPS ARE WATERED THE HYPE IS REAL #victuuri #ishipit

**yuri-plisetsky** What the fuck, @v-nikiforov. We talked about this. Quit lifting other skaters during practice.

**mila-is-my-bae** omg! This is so adorable! @v-nikiforov, I didn’t know you could pair skate!

**yuri-plisetsky** and @katsudon-y, I’m disappointed in you. Go to your corner and think about what you’ve done.

**katsudon-y** @yuri-plisetsky you’re not my dad, son.

**yuri-plisetsky** @katsudon-y I’m not your son, dad. I’m sorry you had to find out this way, but...I’m adopted

**katusdon-y** @yuri-plisetsky hi adopted, i’m dad

**Jjleroy!15** well, I’m the King and I’m going to win gold at the gpf! @katsudon-y @yuri-plisetsky

**katsudon-y** @Jjleroy!15 I mean, I’m no history major but I don’t remember ‘le roi’ being a particularly lucky title.
yuri-plisetsky @katsudon-y #vivelarévolution #canyouhearthepeopleskate #yurisgoldandsilver #victorcanhavebronzeIguess

lutzoflove The photo is cute and all and I love it, but let’s talk about the real gift here: the Yuris being friends and roasting Leroy in the comment section.

tell-me-a-tale I really want to know how they all met

lutzoflove @tell-me-a-tale don’t we all

Chapter End Notes

I promise we’re getting into competition season soon! As you can see, my impulse control around writing adorable victuuri moments is weak like victor is weak for yuuri's entire existence.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Phichit makes a group chat, the Detroit skaters take a road trip, and Yuuri gets sassy with the press.

Chapter Notes

Uh, so...the group chat is a thing that happened. I promise it's relevant. And we get to meet the other male skaters!

Sorry this took longer than the previous chapters, real life stuff came up. So it goes.

And thank you so much for everyone who took the time to comment or kudos or just read the damn thing (but especially the commenters, you guys are the real heroes of this site)!! I'm overwhelmed by the response this has gotten!! It makes me smile every time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

peachy-chuchu created the group Men’s Singles Figure Skating Chat

peachy-chuchu added so_katsuDONE, venti-makkachino, lion_of_the_church, ludaCHRIS, popabitch, icetigrr01, cao_bin, m_crispino, and electric-sheep-dreams to the group

peachy-chuchu: hey hey everybody and welcome to the official mens singles figure skating group chat!

peachy-chuchu: i’m your host, phichit chulanont, and i have summoned you all here today to discuss our assignments for the upcoming gpf series

peachy-chuchu: and the juicy juicy skate gossip, of course

so_katsuDONE: phichit why are you awake

peachy-chuchu: why are you awake, yuuri? Do i need to have a talk with victor?

so_katsuDONE: wtf phichit, it’s not like that with us! I’m doing homework!

ludaCHRIS: ...studying your Russian, perhaps? (°_5°)

so_katsuDONE: yeah, I want to learn how to say “look, chris got silver again” in the language of actual gold medallists.
icetigrr01: I came in here to tell you guys to quit blowing up my phone during practice and instead I witness a fucking murder

cao_bin: i honestly had no idea katsuki had it in him

Private message between peachy-chuchu and so_katsuDONE

peachy-chuchu: so, yuuri, you know the walls in our apartment are really thin, right?

peachy-chuchu: like, really, really thin

peachy-chuchu: i have heard

peachy-chuchu: ...things...

so_katsuDONE: ...

so_katsuDONE: ok so it is like that but you don’t have to put it on the group chat

peachy-chuchu: my lips are sealed

peachy-chuchu: unlike someone’s : )

so_katsuDONE: phichit.

peachy-chuchu: *sniffs* my little yuuri is all grown up and getting down and dirty with the man of his teenage fantasies. I’m so proud

so_katsuDONE: phichit i swear to god

Men’s Singles Figure Skating Chat

peachy-chuchu: cranky no filter yuuri is my favourite yuuri you guys have no idea

lion_of_the_church: I...honestly didn’t know this was a thing and now I feel like I’ve been missing out.

lion_of_the_church: yuuri, why are you never this savage when we see you at competitions?

popabitch: I thought the point of this chat was to discuss our gpf assignments, not katsuki.

peachy-chuchu: it has many purposes! But ok, if you insist on ruining the fun. Name, country, assignments, go! I’ll start

peachy-chuchu: phichit chulanont, Thailand, Skate America, cup of China!

popabitch: thank you. Georgi Popovich, Russia, Skate Canada, and Trophee de France

m_crispino: Michele Crispino, Italy, Skate Canada, and Rostelecom Cup with my amazing sister Sara.
electric-sheep-dreams: MICKEY! WE’RE AT ROSTELECOM TOGETHER!!!

Private message between m_crispino and electric-sheep-dreams

m_crispino: YOU STAY AWAY FROM SARA, WHOEVER THIS IS

electric-sheep-dreams: Mickeyy : ( it’s Emil

m_crispino: ...oh. but you should still keep away from her.

electric-sheep-dreams: aw but she already agreed to go to dinner with me and mila and anette! You should come too!!!

m_crispino: ...fine. but only to keep an eye on you.

electric-sheep-dreams: yay!!! : )

Men’s Singles Figure Skating Chat

lion_of_the_church: Leo de la Iglesia, USA, Skate America and NHK Trophy! See you guys there!

electric-sheep-dreams: Emil Nekola, Czech Republic, skate America and Rostelecom!!

icetigrr01: ugh fine i’ll play. Yuri Plisetsky, Russia, skate america and china cup, and then i’m going to kick all your asses at the final.

icetigrr01: btw, why isn’t Otabek Altin on this chat?

peachy-chuchu: bc nobody’s got the Mystery of Kazakhstan’s number, obv

icetigrr01: that’s because he’s got good taste

icetigrr01: hold on

icetigrr01 has added DJOtabeka to the chat

DJOtabeka: Hello, everyone. Otabek Altin, Kazakhstan, Cup of China and Rostelecom Cup.

peachy-chuchu: !!!!! H O W?!!

DJOtabeka: It wouldn’t be a mystery if I told you, now, would it, Chulanont?

icetigrr01: *drops sunglasses, skates into the sunset*

popabitch: they’ve been chatting on Instagram since the whole Victor Incident.

icetigrr01: you know, for a dramatic little bitch you sure know how to ruin the moment

ludaCHRIS: don’t fight, children.
ludaCHRIS: And if we’re still doing assignments, I’m Christophe Giacometti of Switzerland. But you can call me anything you want ; ) i’ll see you all at the Trophee de France and the Rostelecom cup

ludaCHRIS: btw, petit, I need your #

DJOtabeka: Watch it, Giacometti.

icetigrr01: thanks, beka

peachy-chuchu: guys are you seeing this? the smol angry child made a friend.

icetigrr01: i’m friends with Katsudon too, hamster boy, this is not a first

so_katsuDONE: you admitted we’re friends

so_katsuDONE: i’m actually crying

icetigrr01: pork cutlet, you once ugly cried because you got a mozerella stick in your french fries. your tears are like the zimbabwean dollar of emotions. I want pure 24 karat nikiforov tears or nothing.

icetigrr01: and as for you, chris: fuck no you creep

ludaCHRIS: as much as i have a reputation for inappropriateness, mon enfant, you’re 15, and i’m not interested.

ludaCHRIS: honestly, i just wanted to trade pictures of our cats.

ludaCHRIS: [cutiepie.jpg] this is ma belle chérie, Amélie

ludaCHRIS: Victor is a dog person and doesn’t appreciate her properly

icetigrr01: ...pm me your #.

venti-makkachino: what is this?

venti-makkachino: nvm yuuri explained

venti-makkachino: chris i don’t hate ur cat she’s just not as good as makka and u just need to accept that

venti-makkachino: and if u somehow didn’t know, i’m Victor Nikiforov, Russia, skate America, trophee de france, and also im yuuri’s coach this season!! <3

m_crispino: is that even legal?

ludaCHRIS: it is when you’re victor nikiforov, apparently

so_katsuDONE: yes, we spoke to the isu, it’s legal. And uh...I guess I’m Katsuki Yuuri, Japan, Skate Canada, NHK Trophy

Private message between peachy-chuchu and so_katsuDONE
peachy-chuchu: “I guess”

peachy-chuchu: boi you know damn well what your name is

peachy-chuchu: the whole apartment building knows

peachy-chuchu: victor definitely knows ; )

so_katsuDONE: this is harassment and i’m suing

Men’s Singles Figure Skating Chat

venti-makkachino: am’t u forgetting something, yuuuuri?

venti-makkachino: something v important

venti-makkachino: yuuuuuri

so_katsuDONE: victor you’re sitting right next to me you don’t have to spam the chat

so_katsuDONE: but, um so anyway...i’m also victor’s coach this season.

venti-makkachino: we’re coaching each other!

...peachy-chuchu is typing...

...peachy-chuchu is typing...

peachy-chuchu: you know what, i’ve got nothing. Good night everyone. I’m killing this chat for the good of our collective sanity.

peachy-chuchu has deleted the group Men’s Singles Figure Skating Chat

Phichit was still digesting the absolute military-grade bombshell that Yuuri had casually dropped on the group chat when he made the mistake of slipping unannounced into the closed practice session the two coaches/competitors/fiancés/who-the-fuck-even-knows-anymore were having before they all left for Skate America, ostensibly to take Makkachin out for a walk but actually to engage in some good old fashioned espionage.

Phichit had seen movies, okay. Things like your shy, awkward, terminally anxious best friend suddenly becoming all lovey-dovey and affectionate with his lifelong idol to the point said idol flies out from Russia for him and insists they’re getting married (and then, and then, your little shit of a best friend somehow pulls out a perfect fucking quad flip like he hadn’t just been barely able to land a quad toe loop the week before and now he’s simultaneously coaching/being coached by the greatest figure skater in the world what the ever loving fuck Yuuri)—well, that’s pure sappy feel-good sports anime bullshit. And if by some freak chance it happened in real life (like now, for instance), then logically there were only three possible explanations:
1) Katsuki Yuuri and Victor Nikiforov had both been replaced by androids jointly created by the Russian and Japanese governments to ensure their supremacy in the next Olympics by sabotaging the up and coming American competition. Phichit ranked this as unlikely, but possible. A people who put jam in their tea and made soup from beetroots were capable of anything, and Japan was notorious for advanced robotics research.

2) Yuuri secretly had a better poker face than Seung-gil Lee and Otabek Altin combined, and he actually had met Victor at Skate Canada instead of just “spotting his face over the head of the German representative and walking straight into a door, and I wanted to get closer but Ciao Ciao made me go to the competition doctor to make sure I didn’t have a concussion—but I was just concussed by his beauty, Phichit, you have no idea; he’s so perfect I might die,” as he’d related at length on Facetime that night.

And if they had actually met and hit it off, like Phichit had teasingly predicted in Yuuri’s many late nights of marathoning Victor’s skates and pretending he was just watching for the artistry, well, Phichit knew his bestie, and he knew full well Yuuri was lowkey the biggest troll to ever grace the ice. If he had been able to keep a relationship with Victor Nikiforov to himself (and that was the part where the whole theory fell apart), he was definitely more than capable of using his newly granted powers for evil.

Statistically speaking, this was the most likely option. Phichit was still kind of hoping for robots, though, because how cool was that?

3) And, lastly: time travel. He wasn’t terribly proud of this one—so unoriginal!—and only really added it because a list of two wasn’t really a list, per se, and it filled in his little Post-It of Possibilities to a satisfying ratio of ink to white space.

He also still wasn’t entirely convinced that this had nothing to do with that damn teapot Yuuri had insisted on buying from a suspiciously mystical woman at a rummage sale, but his own investigations into the matter had yielded a sorry lack of genies, so he’d reluctantly marked it down as a ‘no’.

But when everything was said and done, he was, after all, Yuuri’s best friend, even if he was being a secretive asshole. And besties didn’t let besties get engaged out of the blue to mysterious dramatic Russians they’d crushed on since childhood. It was a situation that screamed ulterior motives, and how much did he really know about Nikiforov?

Not enough for him to be marrying(!) Yuuri, glass-hearted bundle of nerves and absurd impulses and single-minded devotion that he was, that was for sure.

And so, with no clear answer in sight and a series of increasingly ridiculous excuses from the Extra Pair™ themselves only contributing to his suspicions, he’d decided a little snooping wouldn’t go amiss.

Maybe he would catch something he could bring up to Yuuri later, when he was in one of his rare moments away from Victor, as definitive proof of just how weird this whole thing was.

He stepped into the rink, and realised that he’d never misread a situation so badly in his life.

Because Yuuri and Victor were pair skating, entangled together in the music like a harmony line written in flashing blades and snow, graceful and trusting and gorgeous and clearly so, so in love.

He’d doubted Victor’s sincerity. He had. Because legends don’t fall in love with their biggest fans, because Yuuri skated like he was carving his heart into the ice and Victor like he had none at all, because it was too much, too fast, too impossible to be true.
And yet.

And yet, here was Victor, leaning into Yuuri’s outstretched hand, gazing at him like he was sunlight and stardust and supernova made flesh, a whole universe condensed into dark eyes and a dancer’s form.

Here was Yuuri, gazing adoringly back in turn, all his labyrinth of walls cast down and following the arcing welcome of Victor’s arms like a revelation.

Here was something tender and intimate and far too honest and he knew he never should have seen it.

He didn’t even think to reach for his phone as he left, as quietly and unobtrusively as he came.

Skate America that year was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a short hop across the lakes from Detroit and a distance even Victor admitted was pointless to fly. Yuuri tried very hard to convince him that they should anyway, because if there was one thing he hated, it was road trips. Well, not road trips in general. He’d always enjoyed them when it was just him and Victor, and maybe Yura, when he left his seething teenage angst at the rink. But road trips with the Detroit skaters? The thought of being trapped in a car, subject to Phichit’s endless library of k-pop and King and the Skater remixes, Celestino’s uncontrolled road rage and frankly illegal driving, Victor inevitably oozing into his space like he was personally offended at the existence of the molecules between them (okay, so maybe he didn’t really mind that one), and the unfortunate addition of a couple of pair skaters he knew only vaguely and didn’t trust not to make the whole journey awkward and terrible—well, it gave him the kind of prickly, uncomfortable feeling he usually associated with group projects and the way certain fans always felt the need to lean in just a little too close.

Victor loved road trips, however, and Yuuri loved Victor. Hopelessly, helplessly, absolutely. And so, the last week in October, he found himself crammed into a rental van with his husband, Phichit, Celestino, the pair skating couple apparently named Liza and Mason, and Makkachin, speeding down the 1-94 at the mercy of the Italian coach’s erratic driving.

“Tell me again why—oof—Makka is here?” Yuuri demanded, shifting said dog’s paws off his lap only to find them quickly replaced with Victor’s long legs. The two of them had claimed the back row of seats for their own, leaving the pair skaters the middle and Phichit to sit up front with Celestino with a teasing, “keep it PG, children.”

“We can’t skate without our mascot!” Liza said brightly.

Victor’s expression switched immediately from “Vitya-Yuuri’s-Husband, fully intending to spend the next six hours cuddling with the cutest boy in the world and our dog and maybe make out a bit if everyone else falls asleep” to “Victor Nikiforov, five-time world champion in figure skating and cutting remarks, about to eviscerate someone’s self esteem with surgical precision and a magazine-perfect smile.”

Yuuri reached out and gently covered his mouth before he could make the rest of their journey incredibly and inadvisably awkward. “Just let it slide, Vitya,” he murmured in Russian. “You know you’ll always be Makka’s favourite.”
Victor glowered for a moment, before sighing with what Yuuri considered unnecessary drama and folding himself over to curl completely around him. Wrapping his arms around the lanky figure clinging to him like a particularly affectionate koala, and determinedly not thinking about his current lack of a seatbelt, Yuuri congratulated himself on a disaster well averted.

He should have known better than to let his guard down, however, because the moment he did, a sharp “You can’t skate with her, either,” was hissed in accented Japanese from the suspiciously innocent looking Russian snuggled against his shoulder.

“Why are you like this?” Yuuri said, as Makkachin sat up and began happily panting her vaguely fish-scented poodle breath in his face.

Victor ignored him. “We should play a game,” he insisted instead, switching to loud, accented English, butting his head gently against Yuuri’s shoulder. “Like they do in movies! It’ll be fun!”

“Yes! Game time!” Phichit exclaimed from the front, bouncing in his seat, a blinding grin flashing in the rear view mirror. Yuuri contemplated the possible ease of prying Victor off him and flinging himself out the nearest window.

Pressing one finger against his lips, an alarmingly enthusiastic gleam in his eye, Victor continued, “What’s the one all the American films are always talking about? ‘I investigate’? Nyet, that doesn’t sound right. I search? Eh, nyet. I agent? I KGB?”

“It’s ‘I Spy’,” the male pair skater said, almost apologetically.

Phichit snickered into his hamster pillow. “I kind of like ‘I KGB’.”

Yuuri closed his eyes and prayed for a swift and merciful death.

The moment they arrived at the official hotel in Milwaukee, tumbling out the car in a pile of duffels, garment bags, and empty coffee cups, they were met by a great horde of flashing cameras, waving microphones, and questions shouted by men and women with the eager, politely predatory look Yuuri always associated with the press.

“I didn’t miss this part of competing,” Victor murmured in irritated Russian, before draping an arm around Yuuri’s shoulders and flashing a trillion-ruble smile at the gathered reporters.

Yuuri hated that smile. It was a jarring reminder of the Victor who’d been stuck in a holding pattern inside his own mind for an endless, dragging decade, king of the world and barely there to see it—of all the years before Yuuri and Victor, broken, lonely entities, had careened into one another and become Yuuri-and-Victor Katsuki-Nikiforov, still broken but no longer lonely, their shattered edges fitting together and filling with gold.

Still, the waiting reporters knew none of that, knew only the Victor who dropped winks like divine favours and smiled like a beautiful, dead-eyed painting, who’d stepped off the podium at last season’s Worlds and wondered what was left when the screams and flowers were gone.

This was what they expected.

This was what they wanted, the ice king who made the masses sigh, his Victor all flawless and untouchable and dead, and Yuuri hated them for it.

But Victor’s arm was warm around his shoulders, and the look he cast him in the space between camera flashes was all love and lightness and wonderfully, gorgeously alive, and so Yuuri raised
his head and strode through the crowd like a wiser and more patient Orpheus, who knew his Eurydice would always follow him out of the underworld.

“Mr. Nikiforov! What did you see in skater Katsuki that led you to fly halfway across the world to coach him—and then take him on as your own coach?”

“Yuuri Katsuki! Are we to understand that you have genuinely accepted the position of coach to Victor Nikiforov? And that he’s coaching you in turn? Has the ISU signed off on this?”

“What qualifications do you have for the position? What does Japan’s rising star have to offer the four time World Champion that Yakov Feltsman or even Celestino Cialdini do not?”

“Mr. Nikiforov, is this just another way for you to surprise your audience, as you so often claim is your goal?”

“Are you two romantically involved?”

Yuuri and Victor, trailed by the other wide-eyed members of the Detroit Skate Club and a displeased looking Makkachin, reached the door to the hotel. On a sudden whim, Yuuri turned, flashing his signature Eros smirk.

“If you’re looking for a date, Mr—” he eyed the nametag of the reporter who’d offered this last, particularly prying question, “DeVarre, I can give you Chris Giacometti’s number. He likes pushy men. Otherwise, I suggest you stick to asking about skating.”

Beside him, Victor made a noise he really hoped the microphones hadn’t picked up and redoubled his apparent mission to press himself as closely as possible to Yuuri’s side.

Mentally throwing an apology to Chris for throwing him to the wolves like that, he continued in the same dry tone, “As to the questions actually relevant to the competition—yes, I am Victor’s coach, yes, he’s my coach, yes, the situation is unorthodox but ISU regulations don’t actually prevent it, and I have no doubts whatsoever that it will work out wonderfully for us. Victor has always been my inspiration and having him so close has improved both of our skating.”

One particularly insistent reporter called in a sharp Russian accent, “Considering your relatively lacklustre career so far, what makes you think you’re qualified to comment on the state of the four time World Champion’s skating?”

“And what, exactly.” Victor cut in, voice silky smooth and deadly like blades on fresh ice, “makes you qualified to comment on the state of Yuuri’s? I seem to recall a shocking number of last place finishes before your retirement, Alyona Dmitrievna.”

Yuuri turned to flash a smile at him, and was met with a very unexpected but not unwelcome faint blush across the light smattering of freckles on Victor’s nose. He very gently bumped his hip against his husband’s before turning back to the reporters and finishing, in the perfectly unflustered tone he’d finally mastered after long years of exposure to his Russian found family and their unbridled insanity, “I invite you to watch my programs at Skate Canada in two weeks before you comment, alright? Now we would very much like to check in to our hotel and get settled, so if you don’t mind...?”

With that, he pushed through the doors into the lobby, Victor at his side, and managed to make it safely out of camera view before he started shaking.

On the whole, he decided, dropping down in a nearby armchair while Victor checked in for both of them and taking in a series of slow, deep breaths, that could have gone much, much worse. Despite his pounding heart, he was almost pleased.
He was definitely pleased when Victor pinned him to the wall the moment they made it to their shared hotel room with a growled “I love it when you get cocky with the press,” and a bruising kiss.

[video]
**Katsuki Yuuri and Victor Nikiforov Shut Down Pushy Reporters at Skate America**
615,412 views

**axelotl**
OMG THE SASS I CAN’T THESE TWO GIVE ME LIFE “If you want a date I can get you Chris Giacometti’s number” I DIE
GIVE ME MORE PERFECT SASSY SKATING POWER COUPLE PLS

**Goddamnit Anders**
@axelotl they’re not even together for ffs

**joseph_martiner**
Kind of shitty for Nikiforov to bring up that one lady’s failed skating career. Low blow, my dude.

**pocketsandSHASHA**
R u kidding that was the best part! all hail nikiforov our new king of shade

**scaramouche fandango**
Lol Victor Nikiforov has been throwing shade since he was tall enough to cast a shadow
Check out his old press conferences, the man is ice cold

**blue electric angels**
GODDAMN KATSUKI THAT SMIRK mmmph [long string of fire emojis]
I see you checking that out, victor, you ain’t subtle

**Sir Alec of Kerry**
Chulanont’s panicked oh shit besties getting savage again gotta grab my camera while Coach Cialdinis just hanging out in the background petting makkachin like ‘i can’t believe this is my life’
Same, coach, same

**yoyowhoa**
Did anyone else notice victor’s face at 0:53 when yuuri turned and started getting smart with that reporter? Like wow nikiforov, get you some gatorade for that thirst
And then katsuki’s little hip bump and that smile?

Yeah i’m calling it. SS Victuuri has officially left port.

GladOSX

@yoyowhoa omg victor’s blushing??! This is? The most? Adorable? Thing? I’ve ever seen?!

NEW MESSAGE FROM smol piroshky cat

I finally arrive in America, only to find that you assholes have been causing trouble without me?

I am disappoint. -_- 

sorry Yura! It wasn’t really intentional.

we’re in room 417. There’s katsudon piroshky : )

I made them before we left but they’re still good

i’m on my way. Tell the old man to put on some clothes or i’ll cut him with my knife shoes.

why would you just assume he’s naked? >_<

...he’s victor. he’s *always* naked. Its his thing.

i...can’t really argue with that

I’m here

OPEN THE DOOR KATSUDON

HURRY UP YAKOV IS COMING

OPEN THE DOOR OR WE WILL ALL DIE

KATSUDOOON

Chapter End Notes

Okay, I for sure promise we're getting to the actual competition next chapter. For sure. Definitely.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

SKATE AMERICA!!!

Chapter Notes

At last, competition. Bloodthirsty rivalry, drama, betrayal--

Yeah, no. It's disgusting cavity inducing fluff. Call your dentist, schedule an appointment today.

I regret nothing.

Also, you can pry the headcanon that Victor "true love and miscommunication" Nikiforov is a diehard Jane Austen fan out of my cold dead hands. Just imagine young Vitya, sitting in his big, empty flat with makka, watching the bbc pride and prejudice miniseries to improve his English and being enthralled. Imagine young Vitya dreaming of his own Mr Darcy to love him and all his flaws, imagine him devouring all her books and holding on to the desperate hope that somewhere out there is someone who won't think he's too much and not enough and everything all at once. Imagine him crying over the weddings and love confessions because he doesn't have that and he wants it so, so badly.
Imagine one lazy day when he's lying around with his fiance, he shyly suggests to Yuuri that they watch the miniseries. And Yuuri, who took numerous English lit classes in college even though he didn't have to and once wrote a novel-length pride and prejudice fanfiction starring Victor Nikiforov as Mr Darcy and himself as Elizabeth Bennet, practically bounces in excitement and then solemnly quotes along with all the most romantic lines, staring directly into victor's eyes.
Victor cries.


See the end of the chapter for more notes.

To Yuri’s surprise and annoyance, Victor was the one to finally open the door to the couple’s hotel room. Yuri craned his head around him, trying to see what the hell Katsudon thought he was doing. And maybe get him in range for an unnecessarily aggressive tackle hug. The old man, too, but he’d seen him more recently and he wasn’t likely to get one without the other anyway.

“Hi Yura!” Victor said happily, glancing down the empty hall before pulling him inside and closing the door behind him. “My Yuuri had to run out to give Phichit something. Do you want to see the video Minako-sensei sent me of his first dance recital?”

Yuri’s irritation immediately vanished. “The one where he’s dressed as a taiyaki and dancing to that piece from the Nutcracker?”
“Ye—how did you know that? Minako only agreed to send me the video this morning! I had to send her a photo series of me in the middle of my skincare routine, a shirtless selfie with Chris, and a written statement saying Yuuri was a better skater and dancer than I’ll ever be! I mean, that part’s just true, but the photos, Yura…” he gave a deep sigh, throwing himself on the bed with an expression Yuri had only otherwise seen on the kind of stuffy, melodramatic old paintings they hung in the museums Lilia had forced him to go to. (“Culture is important, Yuri Nikolayovich! I will not have one my students slouching around spouting nonsense like an ignorant American!”) “You know I look awful when I’m beautifying.”

Yuri didn’t bother trying to hide his smugness at the betrayed look on Victor’s face. “Mari-chan showed me. Years ago. And I didn’t even have to compromise my dignity for it. Not that you have dignity to start with, old man.”

“Yura, I am twenty six. I am in the full bloom of youth.”

“Really? With the way you’re balding, you look like you’re a hundred.”

Victor threw a pillow at him. Yuri caught it. “You take that back!”

“Send me the video and I might.”

There was a sharp cough from the doorway. Slowly, guiltily, they turned to face the source.

“What video?” Katsudon demanded, stepping into the room and setting the crinkled paper bag in his hands onto the nearby table. He looked...almost exactly the same as he had five years in the future, just with shorter hair.

Between him and Minako Okukawa, Yuri was starting to wonder if there really was something in the hot springs at Hasetsu that prevented ageing.

“Hello, Yura! We missed you!” he said, crossing over to Yuri and, before he could form an objection, enfolding him in a crushing hug. Yuri—though he’d never admit it to anyone outside this room—clung back just as tightly, burying his face in Katsudon’s soft sweater, nose full of citrus and tea leaves and the lingering scent of the detergent that the couple always used. It felt like coming home, so much more than his dorm at the rink or his room at Yakov and Lillia’s ever had.

Yuuri pulled back and beamed at him. The hotel room went from dim to summer-bright at the expression, which vanished as he turned to look at the man on the bed. “Vitya, what video?”

Teleportation, Yuri mused, had always seemed like a ridiculous concept straight from those cheesy as fuck science fiction shows Katsudon liked. But faced with the speed with which Victor went from lying sprawled on the bed to wrapping himself like a particularly leggy squid around his husband, he was willing to entertain it as a genuine possibility.

“Nothing, solnyshko!” he cooed—fucking cooed. Yuri, holding down the fort in St. Petersburg, had actually managed to forget how incredibly annoying the couple could be without the buffer of 5000 miles between him and them.

“Vitya, my love,” Katsudon said, seemingly completely unfazed by the fact that the grown man he had (willingly!) married was now draped over him like a fucking human coat. “This wouldn’t have anything to do with the sudden messaging spree between you and Minako-sensei, would it? Because I remind you that my best friend is Phichit Chulanont, and even you have shameful bits of internet history you don’t want dug up.”

“Can you really blame me for wanting more videos of my adorable, amazing, talented husband doing the things he does best?” Victor said, punctuating his question with an obnoxious number of
kisses.

“I’m pretty sure there are no videos of me sobbing in bathrooms and freaking out over nothing,” Katsudon said, turning red and swatting lightly at his husband in a way that seemed far less of a rebuke than Yuri thought the situation merited.

Abruptly, he stopped, looked horrified. “There aren’t, are there?”

“No,” Yuri interrupted, before this could get out of hand. “And believe me, I looked.”

Katsudon made a noise that was halfway between a whine and a laugh. “You would. Now go eat your piroshky, Yuri 2.0,” he said, pointing at the bag on the table with the arm that was not currently in Victor’s possession. “Maybe if you eat enough of them, you can grow enough to be Yuri 1.5.”

“Give it another two years and I’ll be taller than you again, shrimp,” Yuri returned, crossing to the table and trying not to smile too hard. It wouldn’t do for the other two to realize how much he’d missed them.

Then his expression dropped as the implications of his previous statement hit him. “Oh shit. Shit shit fuck. I have to go through puberty again. Katsudon, kill me now and put me out of my misery.”

“But then you wouldn’t have the satisfaction of beating JJ to every medal for the next decade or so,” Katsudon said, damnably reasonable hellspawn that he was.

“Who?” Victor said, reaching for a piroshok.

Yuri slapped his hand away. “You’ve had Katsudon there to make you piroshky for weeks. These are mine.”

The Japanese Yuuri looked exasperated. “Vitya, you know exactly who JJ is. You were at his wedding. He was at our wedding.”

“Oh,” Victor said. “You mean Jean Jacket Levi? The one who wore an absolutely appalling purple and green tux to the altar? It deserved an objection all on its own.”

“Vitya,” Katsudon said. “Don’t make fun. Jam Jar Larue was really proud of that abomination.”

Yuri choked on his piroshok. Victor leaned over and patted him gingerly on the back, which was a thoughtful but entirely useless gesture.

“I can’t believe I ever thought you were the nice one,” he managed, once he’d regained his breath.

“The fact that he’s a decent guy under all the JJ Style stuff doesn’t really change the fact that the tux was an eyesore,” Katsudon said, rubbing the back of his neck like he was actually embarrassed about being caught out in being cool. “He knows it, too. Uh, knew it, I guess. Knows it? Anyway. He spent at least half an hour telling me how only he could have pulled it off. We were nearly late to the ceremony.”

“I still can’t believe you agreed to be one of that asshole’s groomsmen,” Yuri griped, wiping rice off his mouth.

“He actually asked me to be best man,” Katsudon admitted, almost absentmindedly taking a piroshok out of the bag and biting into it with a look of absolute bliss. Swallowing, he continued, “but we were planning our own wedding at the time and there was no way I could have dealt with
the stress.”

“It would have been a lot,” Victor said, swiping the piroshok and taking a large bite as Katsudon pouted at him. Yuri, with great presence of mind, slid the quickly emptying bag around behind his back in an effort to protect his haul, wincing as it crinkled loudly.

“Oh!” With a sudden exclamation, Victor broke out into that absurd heart shaped grin, gesturing wildly with the pastry. Katsudon removed it from his hand and set it on the table, sighing. “Wait, zolotse! I have an idea. This time, we should elope! We could get married in Sochi after I win gold —”

“Bronze,” Yuri corrected absently, debating how much he would regret eating another calorie-dense katsudon piroshok during his practise skate tomorrow.

The older man ignored him. “—it would be like the banquet where we met, but I won’t have to wait two months with no messages from you afterwards! And we can skip the whole season of me suffering while you dance to Eros and then turn around and act like you don’t understand what flirting is, too, while we’re at it.”

Katsudon spun in his husband’s grip, looking absolutely horrified. “Oh my god, are you still mad about that? I told you I was sorry! I’m still sorry! So, so sorry. I never remember anything when I drink that much, Chris could have told you that and I still don’t know why he didn’t—please don’t not marry me again. I love you.”

“Aww, zolotse, I’m just teasing. Mostly. I was very hurt by your rejection, my enchanting katsudon fatale.”

“It wasn’t a rejection! I’m just—I’m very dense.”

“I know. Trust me, I know.”

Katsudon looked upset. “You know I would never hurt you intentionally, my Vitya.”

Victor bumped their noses together. Yuri sighed loudly. They ignored him. “I know that too. It was four years ago, lubov moya. I’m over it.”

Yuri shook his head and went to go sit in the corner with his bag of piroshky, pulling out his phone to text Otabek. There was a reason he had never lived with them for any length of time, and this was it.

“Promise?” Katsudon said. Then, softer: “We can still elope, though, if you want. I...I want to be properly married to you again as soon as possible. Although my parents may never forgive you if we don’t let them have some kind of ceremony.”

It was like a switch was flipped as Victor’s expression changed from serious to utterly delighted.

“Yes! Let’s!” He grabbed his husband’s hand with a look of absolutely sickening adoration, the other scrabbling frantically in his pocket for something. Eyes narrowing with a sudden, prescient suspicion, Yuri raised his phone and thumbed to the camera app.

“Yuuri Katsuki-Nikiforov,” Victor said, hand finally emerging from his pocket with a ring, a circle of gleaming gold that caught the light in the same impossibly dramatic way the ones from the previous timeline always had. God, they were so predictable. “My love, my life, my inspiration, let’s run away and get married again.”

Katsudon was gazing back with that same soppy, love-struck look, cheeks pink and eyes shining.


Yuri waited with what anyone would surely consider godlike patience for them to finish being disgusting, scrolling through the pictures he’d just taken and selecting his favourites. He had to admit, there were some really good ones. Grossly sentimental, of course. Sappy. But...still nice. In the kind of way that made you want to smile, even if it made your teeth hurt. Like photos of sleeping kittens.

When they showed no signs of stopping the pda, however, he coughed pointedly and said, “Aren’t you supposed to trade rings before you make out?”

Katsudon jumped, and tried to hide his impressively red face in Victor’s shirt, leaving only the tips of his ears visible to betray his blush.

Victor, of course, was shameless. “I wasn’t aware there was an official schedule, rebyonok,” he said haughtily, an effect ruined completely by the idiotic grin on his face and the fact that he went immediately back to nuzzling at his husband-fiancé-whatever. “Give me your hand, zolotse. I have to put a ring on it. Yura insists.”

Yuuri drew back, beaming, and offered the older man his right hand so he could slide the gleaming circle onto the third finger.

“A gold ring for my gold medal,” he announced, lifting Katsudon’s hand to his mouth and kissing it. Yuri, yet again, sighed loudly, and was, yet again, ignored.

“That’s so lame, you dork. I love it. I love you,” Katusdon said, taking the other ring from Victor and sliding it onto his finger in turn. Then his grin widened. “So, what does your fianSAY? I do.”

“That’s so terrible,” Victor whispered, seemingly in awe.

“I know,” Katsudon said. Then, almost shyly: “I have more.”

Victor looked as though he’d been offered a dowry of a hundred poodles and first edition Jane Austens. “I love you.”

“Oh my god,” Yuri said, jumping to his feet and clutching the piroshok bag close to his chest. “I’m leaving. Why can’t you do this when I’m not here to suffer through it?”

“Aw, Yura. You know you love us!”

“You don’t mean I like you, or your gross infatuation and bad jokes,” he returned, darting towards the door before he could be lured into staying with promises of further food and embarrassing childhood videos of the pork cutlet.

As he stepped into the hallway and turned to close the door behind him, he could hear Katsudon giggling, “Why do melons have to get married in church? Because they cant-elope!”

He stopped. Breathed in. Exhaled. And then stuck his head back in the room and yelled, “You’re wedding my thirst for revenge!” before slamming it shut and running down the hallway as fast as his teenage legs could carry him.

Yuri Plisetsky: 1. Everyone Else: 0.
The next couple of days passed in a flurry of carefully guarded skate practices and occasional interviews from the rare, brave reporter who managed to weather both Victor’s dismissively icy stare and Yuuri’s well-honed evasive manoeuvres. And then, in what seemed barely a blink, it was time for the short program, and Yuuri’s debut as coach.

“How do I look?” he said, fiddling with his tie as he stepped out of the hotel bathroom in a white formal shirt, charcoal waistcoat, slacks, and a frown.

“Mmm, vkusno,” Victor said, smirking as he made a twirling motion with his finger. Yuuri raised an eyebrow but obediently turned 360 degrees, hands on his hips. His husband watched, pressing a thoughtful finger against his lips. “No one will be paying any attention to my skating at all. The judges will be so overwhelmed by your Eros they’ll award me world records by default. Yura will throw his skates. It’s perfect.”

“Seriously, Vitya,” Yuuri said.

“I am being serious,” Victor said. “You may not believe it, but you are beautiful, my Yuuri.”

“Not as beautiful as my husband,” Yuuri said, and then immediately blushed.

Victor smiled and kissed him, and then drew back, fussing with Yuuri’s tie in an uncharacteristic show of restlessness.
“Vitya,” Yuuri began, after a moment, frowning at the man in front of him. “You aren’t worried about competing again, are you? I mean, I know you were retired, you know, before, but you’re back in top form, now. You’re twenty six again. And I’ve watched you skating, these past weeks. You’re better than you ever were, you know that, right? I mean, you’ve always been so amazing, but this time around—Vitya, I wish you could see you skate like I do. You’re so beautiful and musical and graceful and you look so happy on the ice—you never did before but now you’re like the sun, and I’d give up everything if it meant you could be that happy forever and—oh no, Viten’ka, love, don’t cry! I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to bring it up! I—I’m just going to stop talking now. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t you dare apologize, Yuuri Katsuki-Nikiforov,” Victor said, voice rough as he wrapped Yuuri in a tight hug. “That’s the most romantic, inspiring thing anyone has ever said to me in my life.”

“Oh,” Yuuri said, turning bright red, and hugged him back.

Catching sight of the clock over his husbands shoulder, however, he yelped and pulled away.

“Go grab your stuff! We need to get to the rink so you can warm up!”

“Hmm,” Victor said, tightening his grip and nuzzling his neck affectionately. “Are you sure? I feel perfectly warm already.”

“Vitya, I am not letting you hurt yourself in your first competition of the season just because you’re an incorrigible cuddler!” So saying, he firmly disentangled himself from his pouting husband, who muttered something in Russian he was embarrassed to have understood. He paused in reaching for his coat, face warm. “And don’t you dare make me blush while I’m acting in official capacity as your coach, Mr. Katsuki-Nikiforov.”

“What, like you did every time you skated Eros our first season together? Yuuri, I didn’t think I’d married a hypocrite.”

“You choreographed that program, Vitya, you have no one to blame but yourself.”

“You certainly made it your own, though,” Victor said, taking the team Russia jacket Yuuri held out for him with a kiss. “I think the tie grab was my favourite little improvisation, da? Though as your programs go, I am partial to the Duetto, myself.”

“Romantic,” Yuuri said, and held open the door.

[Livestream] Men’s Singles Skate America Megathread (self.FigureSkating)

submitted 7 hrs ago by quadflipyouoff[M]

Okay, fans! The season has finally kicked off and it’s time for SKATE AMERICA! MILWAUKEE REPRESENT!

I’ve stickied this thread for a reason: to keep discussion here instead of spamming the same questions all over the sub. If it’s about Skate America, post here, or be deleted.

Check the sidebar for posting guidelines, and don’t forget rules one through three: HAVE FUN, NO DOXXING, AND DON’T BE A DICKWAD. We mods wield the mighty banhammer, and we are not afraid to use it.
Ok, I’ll bite with the obvious question: raise your hand if you think the whole Katsuki/Nikiforov coaching thing is total bs. Like, how did the ISU even let this fly?

Dude, everyone knows the ISU has been sucking Nikiforov’s dick since the Turin Olympics.

They better get in line behind Katsuki then lol

Because deciding that is their goddamn jobs and they know what’s legal and what’s not better than some random asshole from reddit.

Besides, they haven’t even skated yet. Let’s see how Nikiforov does with his new coach, and vice versa, before making snap judgements.

EDIT: wow lots of people eating their words today lol

To be honest, I’m actually pretty excited. I know this sub loves to drag on Katsuki, but skating isn’t all about jumps and his step sequences and interpretation are INCREDIBLE.

And—downvote all you want—Nikiforov’s are okay at best. He needs help on them. Dude’s like a beautiful, perfect robot.

EDIT: I WAS SO WRONG HE’S ALIVE HE’S BEEN RESURRECTED THANK GOD AND YUURI KATSUKI

Jesus fucking Christ can we stop talking about Nikiforov’s new boyfriend for one second and concentrate on the skating?

I, for one, am excited to see what Yuri Plisetsky brings to the table for his Senior Debut. And
Phichit Chulanont is supposed to be really good, too. There hasn’t been a decent Thai skater around in ages, and I am stoked.

**littlelegos545 694 points 2 hours ago**

Oh my god, don’t get me started on Yuri Plisetsky. That boy can *skate*. He’s like a tiny, beautiful record-smashing machine.

Unpopular prediction: he’s going to knock Nikiforov of his pedestal, and they both know it, too.

Chulanont’s good, but I’m also really looking forward to Leo de la Iglesia’s programs. His music choices are always on point.

Nekola’s a blast, too. And he always looks so happy when the cameras catch him off ice!

load more comments (52)

“So, should I call you Coach Yuuri now, or what?” Phichit said, sliding to a stop next to him like a grinning harbinger of mischief as he watched Victor run through a portion of his step sequence during their group’s warm-up time.

“Edges, Vitya!” he called, before turning to give Phichit what even compulsive C-SPAN viewers would agree was a masterful side-eye. “You can call me crying from your last place finish when you pop your jumps because you didn’t warm up properly,” he said.

“Chulanont! Back on the ice!” Celestino yelled from somewhere to their left.

Yuuri tried very hard not to look smug.

Wiping imaginary tears from his eyes, Phichit skated off backwards, stretching his free hand towards Yuuri. “My best friend has turned to the dark side,” he declared, expression tragic. “But alright. We’ll continue this later. After I’ve crushed your boyfriend in the short program.”

“Fiancé,” Yuuri corrected mildly, touching the ring that he currently wore on a chain under his shirt. They’d caused too much of a scandal already in the last few weeks to justify wearing them openly, although he sorely missed the feeling of his wedding ring on his finger. He knew Victor felt the same, which was probably why he’d been carrying around the new rings he’d picked up on a quick layover in Barcelona, perfect copies of their old ones down to the matching snowflake halves engraved inside, prepared to propose any minute.

Yuuri wasn’t sure he’d ever been more in love.

Turning his attention back to said Russian, who’d just launched into a flawless quad flip, he allowed himself a small smile. He wasn’t worried, not how he once would have been—well, he was, but mostly in the same unremarkable way he’d been every day of his life, a familiar staticky, sickly orange nerve impulse that fizzed in his spinal cord and underscored every thought with a quiet itching “what if?” After all, if Victor at twenty-six had been incredible, Victor at twenty-six, with the memories and skill of thirty one, was borderline miraculous. “You’re wasting time, Phichit.”

“You didn’t waste any, apparently,” came the response, fading as the Thai skated off across the rink.
Yuuri laughed, remembering the endless aching summer of their first timeline where he and Victor had fallen desperately, separately in love, and refused to admit it to each other until long after there was snow already on the ground.

This time, there would be no misunderstandings.

He smiled, and leaned over boards to call his love off the ice.

Private message between guang-hong_cutie and lion-of-the-church

guang-hong_cutie: leo have u seen him yet

guang-hong_cutie: have u seen Victor Nikiforov?

guang-hong_cutie: he’s in ur group, right?

lion-of-the-church: omg guang-hong, calm your fanboy heart

lion-of-the-church: its not like any other dashing, handsome skaters are competing today

lion-of-the-church: cough cough urs truly

guang-hong_cutie: well obvs I’ll be watching u! Ur my fave! The greatest. The most amazingest. The most musicalest. The winningest.

guang-hong_cutie: but leo

guang-hong_cutie: leo

guang-hong_cutie: its victor nikiforov

lion-of-the-church: who?

guang-hong_cutie: OMG leoooo [guanghongsadface.jpg]

lion-of-the-church: wow no need to bring out the big guns, i’m just messing with you! Here. A peace offering:

lion-of-the-church: [viknik&yuuriklaughing.jpg]

guang-hong_cutie: !!!!!

guang-hong_cutie: ur the best, leo!!!

guang-hong_cutie: good luck out there! I’m cheering for u from china!

guang-hong_cutie: were actually have a watch party

guang-hong_cutie: i made a banner

guang-hong_cutie: [leoisthegreatest.jpg]

lion-of-the-church: !!!!! guang hong you adorable freckled muffin!!!!
The other skaters and coaches drifted up to Yuuri in ones and twos as the short programs progressed, a good number to express their disapproval of the situation, others, mostly the younger skaters like Leo de la Iglesia and Emil Nekola, to offer more optimistic opinions.

“We all looked up to you in Juniors,” Leo explained, shrugging and squinting at the TV where they were watching a new Senior’s clean but uninspired skate. Yuuri hastily wiped the doubtful look off his face. “Your step sequences and spins are the best in the business, hands down, and Nikiforov knows he can’t match up. Obviously he’d see that and want you coaching him.”

“Speaking of which, where is the legend himself?” Emil asked, bouncing at his shoulder.

Yuuri laughed slightly, pointing at the nearby couch where an indistinct figure lay curled up under a heavy peacoat and a Team Russia jacket. “Oh, he’s taking a nap. Vitya always sleeps til the absolute last second before competitions. I’ll wake him up in a minute.”

Leo looked shocked. “I thought that was the angry Russian kid! The other Yuri, Pole-axeski or whatever.”

“Plisetsky,” Yuuri said, trying very, very hard to keep a straight face. “It’s Plisetsky. But no, that’s Vitya snoring over there.” He glanced at the list of upcoming skaters, gauging the time remaining. Vitya was near last, but... “I’m about wake him up, though, he needs to stretch. He was pretty tense during warm up this morning.”

With his back turned to them as he gently prodded his favourite skater awake, he didn’t see Leo grinning at Emil and mouthing “See? Coach material!” before they nodded and looked back at the television. It was probably a good thing. Yuuri never took compliments well.

Victor skated a flawless program. So did a quad-less but electric Leo de la Iglesia. Yuri Plisetsky touched down on his lutz. Phichit Chulanont popped a triple axel but made up in performance components. Emil Nekola flubbed his combination but finished strong.

When the Short Program was over, Victor was in the first over Yuri Plisetsky by 3 points.

NEW MESSAGE FROM: CHRIS! <3

that SP was beyond beautiful, mon ami! I mean, you’re always good, but that was something else. Your cute new coach seems to be working wonders.

I guess it’s all about motivation, eh? ; )

chris, i’m in love with him

i’ve never been so motivated in my life
Thats not what i meant, darling

But...i’m happy. For you both.

thank you, chris. youre a good friend

NEW MESSAGE TO: smol piroshky cat

Yura, DAVAI!!!!!

Tell the old man i am going to crush his FS record

done.

Yuri Plisetsky was Russia’s future, so the media claimed and so Yakov Feltsman confirmed, a risk and a promise all in one, and they had not wanted to chance his potential so early and push him through to Seniors.

Yuri Plisetsky was five foot nothing of pure determination and spite, and pushed through anyway.

Skating sites wrote pages of articles on why he was doomed to failure. Too inexperienced. Too young. Too careless. Too not-Victor-Nikiforov. He would break, they predicted. Yakov Feltsman should know better. He should have waited.

Yuri Plisetsky was stubborn and competitive and a perfectionist in his skating, and the touched down quad lutz that had landed him behind Victor in the short program burned.

Yuri Plisetsky was a tiny, fey creature in his costume as he stood at the boards, all shining pale braids and green fire, otherworldly in the reflected light. Small. Ethereal. Fragile.

Older skaters and coaches—most of them, anyway— looked on doubtfully as he took to the ice. He’d been worn out at the end of his short the day before. He wouldn’t have the stamina for all the quads he had planned for his free skate.

Quiet bets were made on the number of falls he would take.

(Victor, when he found out, went scorched earth on the instigators.)

(Yuuri let him get on with it and waited til he was gone to hand his small, blond co-conspirator his half of the winnings.)

Because Yuri Plisetsky, as it turned out, skated like a demon and an angel all in one, a raging will-o-the-wisp who landed four quads with his arms raised in supplication and shattered Victor Nikiforov’s world record with a smile.

Because Yuri Plisetsky, more than anything, was a petty, petty asshole.

Yuuri was so proud.
A huge congratulations to @icetigerofrussia for breaking @v-nikiforov’s long held FS world record with an amazing performance!

@Yuri+Angels

AAAAAAAHHH @icetigerofrussia just shattered @v-nikiforov’s FS world record!!!!!!!!!!!!!! SO PROUD OF OUR KITTEN

@Yuri+Angels

Suck it up nikifotrash @viknik01 @vnikiforovfc @v-nikiforov

@vnikiforovfc

We’re proud of him too, @Yuri+Angels

@v-nikiforov

@vnikiforovfc We sure are!!! @icetigerofrussia skated incredibly today!! I’m still going to take my record back, tho ; )

@icetigerofrussia

@v-nikiforov lol if you can do that, I’ll skate my exhibition to Theme of King JJ

@icetigerofrussia deal.

Yakov Feltsman had watched with growing concern and greater fury as Vitya—stupid, impressionable Vitya—had run off out of the blue to America of all places, laid his hopes and career on a second rate skater from Japan, and then turned around and declared that skater as his coach as well as his student and his competitor. To say that he was angry would be a disastrous minimization. To say that he was confused—what had he missed, what had this Yuuri Katsuki done to so successfully seduce a boy who, although flighty and wild, had always put the ice before anything else?—would have been an even greater understatement.

He finally confronted the Katsuki boy as Vitya skated out onto the ice for his free skate, resplendent in shimmering blues and mauves and inclining his head to the screaming crowd. Their words before he’d glided off had been inaudible, but no skater had ever really needed words to understand emotion and the message in their clasped hands and tilted heads had been clear.

He wasn’t entirely sure what he’d been expecting—he’d watched the interviews, of course, but cameras never did anyone justice and every public figure had a mask for the media. Still, he’d imagined a slyer, dark-eyed Christophe Giacometti, maybe, a less direct version of the devastating flirt who’d smirked and joked and made seasoned reporters blush and stutter like schoolchildren. A vixen, a demon, a houri, all seduction and charm to lure the greatest figure skater of his generation away (even Yakov, in his single minded drive for the success of his own protégées, had heard the stories of the beautiful Japanese boy who broke hearts at every competition he attended and walked off like the attention was beneath his notice)—but what he found was—

Just a young man, slight and unprepossessing, almost feminine in his curves. Messy hair, on the edge of black and brown, his suit perfectly tailored, his tie slightly askew. Enormous dark eyes, warm with the reddish tint of spice and ore-rich earth, fixed on Vitya from behind ridiculous blue framed lenses.
He was all softness and quiet, gentleness and give, none of which had any place in figure skating and even less in coaching it. Yakov Feltsman was distinctly unimpressed. *This* was what had pulled Vitya away?

“What the hell do you think you’re playing at?” he demanded, in the thick, heavily accented English he’d never quite managed to perfect, stepping to the boards beside him. The music began, and he spared a glance for the silver-haired figure sliding out into the admittedly gorgeous choreography before turning back to Katsuki. “You cannot coach Vitya! You are a child. *He* is a child, a stupid and wilful child, and you are sabotaging both of your careers.”

“Good afternoon, Mr. Feltsman; it is an honour,” Katsuki said in flawless Russian, accent rounding and softening the rough syllables. He bobbed a slight bow, eyes never leaving the man on the ice. “And I will gladly address your concerns about your *former* student, but with all due respect, I am his coach now and he is in the middle of his free skate.”

“With all due respect, Katsuki,” Yakov returned, spitting out the words, “his program will win with or without you. He is Victor Nikiforov. And you are a pretty toy who’s caught his idiotic fancy. Not a coach. Barely a skater.”

“Oh,” was all Katsuki said, blinking those enormous doe eyes as if uncertain, dark lashes brushing his cheeks.

Yakov felt the sudden, utterly irrational urge to apologize, and made a careful note in his mental catalogue of “These Blasted Skaters and Their Manipulation Techniques” re Katsuki Yuuri and his soft, helpless expressions, before swatting it away as one would do a fly.

“So you admit you aren’t qualified!” he said, voice rising dangerously. Out on the ice, Vitya launched into a triple salchow.

“Please be quiet, Mr. Feltsman,” Katsuki said, so firmly that Yakov did, mouth open, off kilter from the whiplash of the sudden turn from yielding water to stone. “My Vitya always gets sloppy with his footwork in this sequence and if I don’t watch him he’ll forget about it and put all his effort into the combination.”

That was...actually true. And not something many people noticed.

“Hmmph,” he said. “So you watch.”

“I’ve been watching him my whole life,” Katsuki said, so quietly he almost missed it, expression like a sunrise as he watched Vitya fly through his step sequence and nail his combination with a lightness Yakov had never seen in him before.

His erstwhile student fell in a heart-stopping spin and finished in a pose that was all clean lines and beauty, his face turned to the side of the rink where Katsuki stood, eyes shining, smiling like a fool.

Blast. This wasn’t an infatuation or a flight of fancy.

This was worse.

The idiot boy was in love.

Victor Nikiforov was in love with Yuuri Katsuki, and they held hands in the kiss and cry as the
scores were announced and Victor took back his world record.

Victor Nikiforov was also a petty, petty asshole.

Yuri Plisetsky @icetigerofrussia
Fuck.

Victor Nikiforov @v-nikiforov
@icetigerofrussia no backsies

Chapter End Notes

I'd say I'm sorry for the puns, but I'm not.

That reddit formatting killed me. I tried.
Interlude: Victor in Detroit

Chapter Summary

The best thing about time travel is getting to redo all the things you thought you'd never be able to have.

A very rare, very special edition Victor POV chapter

Chapter Notes

Be warned, this chapter is a little more serious than the others. Don't worry, there's very little angst, no one gets hurt, no relationship drama or anything like that. It's just Victor dealing with some regrets he has (and fixing them with the help of his husband and a little time travel magic! Yay!). Because goddamn it my boy deserves to be happy.

Victor is a giant nerd and an inveterate bookworm and no one will convince me otherwise.

This is a short chapter, but updates should be quicker again now! I just had to figure out where I was going and get this little idea about Victor out of my system. (You will soon see why I have avoided his POV til now. I have Feelings about Victor Nikiforov).

And, once more, THANK YOU!! so many kudos. So many bookmarks. So many comments. My inner feedback monster is throwing a party.

And without further ado:

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Victor—until Yuuri, that was—had always lived the life of a lonely prodigy, devoting everything he had to skating and a fair bit that he didn’t to it as well. With the heavy title of Russia’s Olympic Future hanging over his head he’d grown up on the ice rink, slogging through his secondary school coursework in his increasingly fleeting free time—and as the golds piled up, so did the expectations. Anything that took away from his training time was sharply vetoed by a demanding Yakov and the flat-eyed administrators of the St. Petersburg athletic-industrial complex; university, in particular, had been out of the question.

Victor had, quietly, obediently, shelved his thoughts on Dostoevsky and Tennessee Williams and the challenges of translation, and gone back to launching himself into his newly minted quad flip, over, and over, and over, until his feet were bloody and his form was perfect.

So he had been shocked—stunned, amazed, proud, and bitingly, desperately envious—to find that Yuuri, whose devotion to the ice rivalled his own and who competed in as many gruelling international competitions as the rest of them, had somehow managed (been allowed, a small, bitter part of his mind whispered) to not only attend university but graduate suma cum laude with a
He had been much less envious and much more hopelessly in love on the sweltering summer day in Hasetsu that Yuuri had spotted him rifling yet again through the few books he’d brought with him with a frustrated expression and disappeared, only to immediately return with his arms full of battered paperbacks.

“Um,” he’d said, rabbit-shy and anxious although Victor had been there for months now and he’d thought they’d started to get comfortable around each other. “Victor? I… I saw you’ve been reading through the same books since you got here and I wondered—well, I just thought that maybe you’d want something new to read? I mean, these are all in English—they’re classics from my college classes mostly because I tend to read the lighter stuff in Japanese and of course I had to take—oh! Hold on, I actually have the Harry Potter books in Russian! You know, because, uh, because I…” at that, he’d trailed off, turning bright red and refusing to meet Victor’s eyes before finishing hastily, “I think they’re in storage still, I’ll go get them! Uh. If you want them, that is.”

Victor very much did. Victor wanted anything Yuuri would give him.

And it had been a greater gift than he’d anticipated, because as it turned out, Yuuri was an incorrigible margin commentator, and the stacks of paperbacks he’d placed carefully on the shelf were filled with scribbles and doodles and caustic asides on literary theory in his scrawling Kanji and meticulous English.

Victor before Yuuri had thought that people who wrote in books should be shot. Victor after Yuuri was enamoured.

(His personal favourite, of course, was the idly doodled heart enclosing a tiny ‘KY + VN’ on page 146 of If On A Winter’s Night a Traveller, but the impassioned defence of the character of Mary Bennet scrawled furiously across an otherwise innocuous paragraph of sisterly interactions in Pride and Prejudice and the scathing critique of the academic disregard for speculative fiction as a genre, complete with diagrams, taking up all of the title page and most of the blanks of a Jules Verne omnibus were close seconds.

The furious ‘FUCK THIS’ painstakingly drawn in beautiful, swirling calligraphy somewhere at the halfway point of The Grapes of Wrath made Victor laugh so hard Makkachin ran out of the room in shock.)

Yuuri, as it turned out, had Opinions about literature. Victor did too, and spent a lot of time staring longingly down the hall at the sliver of light under Yuuri’s door and quietly nurturing fantasies of one day casually bringing up his desire to translate Oscar Wilde into Russian in a way that maintained both the wordplay and the underlying commentary and Yuuri getting it.

One day eventually came. Yuuri got it.

Victor proposed four times in the next hour, despite the fact they’d been married for a year.

But there was always a lingering bittersweetness to those long conversations, a tinge of regret for all the things Victor had never been allowed to have and had tried very hard to believe he never wanted. The ice was his first love, after all, and he couldn’t pretend he was sorry for the path that had led him here, to his beloved husband and his finally happy future.

And so, when Victor woke up one strange day five years in the past and found out that Yuuri—his Yuuri, so clever and sweet and who he absolutely refused to live without—was still technically in college in Detroit, there was only one possible course of action.
Fly to Detroit, move in with his darling husband, coach and train and win every possible competition, and surreptitiously sneak into all the classes he could and devour all the non-skating related knowledge and company he’d been denied the first time around.

He’d always thought he’d been subtle with his regrets regarding his education, until the morning of his third day there, when Yuuri, sleepy-eyed and leaning into him as he made coffee in the tiny kitchen like Victor’s shoulder was the only thing keeping him upright, had tugged on his sleeve and mumbled, “Vitya, you should come to class with me. You’d like it. You can argue with people about books.”

Victor paused, a funny little twinge in his heart.

“Don’t trust him, Nikiforov,” Phichit said from the sofa. “All his classes have names like ‘Advanced Theory of Metaphor Linguistics in 17th Century Argentinian Post-Modernism.’ You’ll die.”

“I don’t speak Spanish?” Yuuri said, lifting his face from his shoulder long enough to direct a deeply bemused look at his friend.

Shaking himself from his momentary daze, Victor contemplated the apartment’s surprisingly wide array of mugs, tapping a finger against his lips. “That was the least ridiculous thing about that sentence.”

“You’re the least ridiculous thing about that sentence,” Yuuri muttered.

Victor thoughtfully selected a mug decorated with poodles and another emblazoned with a large, comforting ‘DON’T PANIC’, before filling them from the coffee pot and moving to the fridge for milk. Yuuri shuffled along with him, arms wrapped around his waist, face pressed into his shoulder.

“I see even the mighty Victor Nikiforov is not exempt from the Certified Human Disaster that is Morning Yuuri,” Phichit said, sounding highly amused as he raised his phone to snap a photo.

“I am blessed by it, you mean,” Victor said firmly, finishing up the coffee making process and transporting the two mugs to the tiny table and sitting down. In a display of half-conscious gymnastic sorcery he had long since given up trying to figure out, Yuuri went from drooping over his back to cuddled up on his lap with apparently no point in between.

Phichit made a noise that sounded suspiciously like a snort.

“C’ffee,” Yuuri demanded, making grabbing motions with his hands. Victor obliged, dropping a kiss on his mussed dark hair as he did so. Yuuri before caffeine may be a grouchy, monosyllabic gremlin, but he was a damn cute one.

Three cups of coffee and a shower later, Early-Morning-Disaster Yuuri had reluctantly yielded his place to Still-Offended-By-The-Existence-of-Mornings-But-Now-Fully-Cognisant-of-It Yuuri.

“I meant it, you know,” he said, digging through the pile of papers on his desk and emerging triumphantly with a yellowing copy of Wuthering Heights. Victor, pulling one of Yuuri’s cozy, overlarge sweaters on top of his own fashionable ensemble, paused, wondering what, exactly, ‘it’ might be.

“About coming to some of my classes,” Yuuri clarified, catching his look as he grabbed a cardigan from a pile on the floor. “Of course, you’d probably have to get permission from the
professor because you’re not technically a student, but Schuyler-sensei at least is really chill and also kind of a fan of yours.” Here he coloured faintly, a light dusting of pink across his cheeks. “I mean, if you wanted to. You don’t have to. I know you’re busy with both our programs and we’re kind of in the middle of a season and all that. It…it just seemed like something you’d enjoy.”

“You are busier than me,” Victor pointed out, with a sudden rush of affection for this ridiculous, hopeless, incredible man. “I mean, you’re coaching me, competing, and going to school full time on top of that. I would have thought it was impossible, except you seem to be managing it magnificently.”

“Well, I mean, I’ve done this before,” Yuuri said, flapping his hands about in the way he sometimes did when he felt the praise was undeserved. “And I have a really good memory. None of the stuff from my Psych classes is anything I didn’t study the first time around, and English classes are much easier when you’ve already read all the books.” He glanced up, flashing a brilliant smile. “And when you have a cute, genius husband who’s read them too, twice as in-depth and in three more languages.”

People had been calling Victor a genius from the day he’d swept onto the International Circuit in a blaze of lilac and silver and swept up a whole royal dowry’s worth of gold. They’d written essays on his choreography, gushed endlessly about his jumps, and declared him, unanimously and without hesitation, a legend on the ice.

Yuuri was the only one who’d ever told him he was just as clever and worthwhile off it.

(Yuuri was the only one who’d ever made the effort to find out.)

(Victor loved him so much it hurt.)

“Just something to thing about, hai?” Yuuri said, picking up his backpack and pulling Victor over by his jumper to plant a fond kiss on his mouth. “I have a statistics lecture this morning, and then Gothic Lit., but I’ll meet you at the rink after, okay? There’s a bento for you in the fridge. I made it last night; it’s the one with the rice Makkachin. Oh, and cell service is kind of hit and miss around here, so I downloaded the campus map and the route to the rink onto your phone already.” He stood on his toes to kiss Victor again, and then, with a hasty “Love you, Vitya!”, hurried off.

“I married an actual angel,” Victor whispered, as Yuuri disappeared out the door, fastening the chest strap on his backpack over three layers of bulky jackets and temporarily blinding himself with his knitted rainbow scarf on the way.

Wayne State Yik Yak

My blood alcohol content is higher than my gpa and I’m not even drunk. 67
3 min

Guys, I’m so sick of meal plan food I am seriously considering catching and grilling 101
one of these fatass squirrels for sustenance. Squirrels have nutrients, right? 7 min
Someone please tell me why there are nerds in ice skating team jackets crying on the quad
9 min

…there are ice skaters at this school? what? since when?
14 min

Dude, literal internationally known figure skaters train at the DSC. We are constantly talking about them on here. Our gorgeous Japanese angel even has his own goddamn alert system so we know when he’s gracing us mere mortals with his presence on campus. Codenames and shit.
It’s amazing.
11 min

Wow, way to give away our secrets.
11 min

Because Victor Nikiforov is here and if you wouldn’t cry tears of gratitude over that do you even qualify as human?
11 min

Yes. Yes we do.
10 min

I saw him walking his dog with CR and Selfie King and I’m not sure I will ever recover.
8 min

Fresh-Baked Cinnamon Rolls
459
Warren and 2nd. Going fast.
13 min

aw, they look cold. So many layers! :(
13 min

I’d still eat them tho. yum.
11 min

remember the rules, anon
the purpose of this is to protect the rare and endangered cinnamon roll from predation, not to encourage it
don’t make this weird
11 min

“don’t make this weird”
“proceeds to liken everyday breakfast items to albino whooping frogs or some shit”
too fucking late bro
10 min

It’s a confetti cake roll today, lol. I’m loving the rainbow sprinkles.
10 min

WHY THE FUCK DO Y’ALL KEEP POSTING ABOUT CINNAMON ROLLS?!!
THERE ARE NEVER ANY FUCKING CINNAMON ROLLS
THE CINNAMON ROLLS ARE A LIE
THIS IS FALSE ADVERTISING
9 min

sssh angry pastry child. all is ok. we are blessed by the iced cake gods.
8 min

all hail
6 min

all hail
6 min

all hail
5 min

I hate everybody on this campus.
3 min

Victor considered Yuuri’s suggestion as he stretched on a mat by the bleachers at the rink, waiting on his husband’s arrival. He wanted more than the ice, this time around, he knew, more than gold medals and bloody feet and the slow enervating emptiness of wondering if there would be anything left of him after the spotlight went out. And Yuuri had given him that. Yuuri deserved the best Victor had to offer in return, and Victor would have poured stars into his hands for nothing at all. Yuuri deserved—

Yuuri deserved a husband who wouldn’t disappoint him. And that was the crux of the matter, because for the tiny offhand suggestion it had been his insecurities were a mudslide burying reason in an endless suffocating chant: you are nothing without skates on your feet. You are not smart enough for him. You are not good enough for him. And off the ice, among people who are just as clever as him, everyone will see it.

He will see it.

(“Vitya, you should come to class with me,” he’d said. Just like that. Just like he thought Victor could keep up with people who’d dedicated their whole lives to their educations. Like it didn’t matter that Victor had barely passed secondary school. Like he’d never sat with a look of exasperated affection on his face as he’d watched Victor fail spectacularly at grocery shopping and programming the DVR and forget how many eggs there were in a dozen. Like offering absolute unquestioned faith before morning coffee to fools who’d never earned it was just a thing that people did.)

(“Vitya, you should come to class with me,” he’d said. Just a sudden thought. Nothing important. Just a sleepy “Victor would like this. Victor would be good at this.”

Just a small little thing.

“I never doubted you were good enough,” Victor heard.

Not small at all.
He joined Yuuri for his Gothic Lit class later that week, and promptly got in a furious debate with the professor and the heretofore reserved exchange student from Finland that ended up spanning the course of several after-class coffee sessions and drinks in the local bar.

The only thing better than the conversation was the delighted smile on his husband’s face when Victor met him at the door with hug and a quiet, “I’m so happy, Yuuri.”

“Me too,” Yuuri said.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

The Detroit boys go jeans shopping, get drunk, and take lots of incriminating photos.

Phichit posts way too many of them.

Also within is the wondrous kinder egg that is Chris POV

Chapter Notes

Have a drunk Victuuri and Phichit chapter in celebration of my birthday! and also to advance the plot I guess.

Note that this chapter technically contains underage drinking, a lot of bad language, implied sexual situations, and reckless abuse of literary allusions. You have been warned.

THIS FIC REACHED 500 KUDOS I AM CRY I AM SCREAM I AM CELEBRATORY ICE CREAM

Thank you so much for all the comments and bookmarks and kudos and especially to those who are commenting on every chapter (I see you. I appreciate you. I just don’t want to call you out specifically if it makes you uncomfortable.) You are all amazing!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Rise and shine, my children!”

Yuuri made a noise like a dying moose and pulled the comforter over his head. It was Saturday. It was before noon on Saturday. This was sacred time, and Phichit was fully aware of that fact.

“Yuuri, my brother, my bestie, my faithful partner in crime, have you forgotten your promise already?” the Thai boy demanded, jumping onto the already crowded bed and sending Makkachin fleeing for the safety of the main room as he tugged the duvet from his grip.

Yuuri groaned, curling himself tighter around Victor as his husband made a move to sit up. “Promises don’t exist before noon, you know this.”

“But Yuuri. This is a crisis.”

“That’s what you said last time and it turned out you just wanted my opinion on your new liquid eyeliner.”

“Implying that makeup is not a life or death matter.” He sat back on his feet, folding his arms. “My cut crease could kill a man.”
“He does have a point, zolotse,” Victor said.

“But Vityaaa,” Yuuri purred, looking up through his eyelashes, chin resting on Victor’s chest, knowing full well that his love was a weak, weak man in the face of his pleading stare. “Saturday morning is fiancé cuddle time. Wouldn’t you rather stay in bed, with me?”

“Well, since you ask so—”

“Oh, no, that’s playing dirty,” Phichit said, poking Yuuri’s side with an unsympathetic finger. Yuuri squealed, flailing wildly in an attempt to protect his ticklish ribs. “The Yuuri Katsuki Maybe-It’s-Maybelline Maybe-He’s-A-Sex-God Charm Bomb is an illegal move. That’s a penalty. And that means—”

“Okay, okay, I’m getting up now!” Yuuri said, sitting up fast enough to make himself dizzy.

“Wow,” Victor said as he stretched lazily, muscles rippling in the warm sunlight. Yuuri stared shamelessly. He was awake before noon on his off day; he deserved this. “So effective! Teach me your ways.”

“Those secrets are reserved only for the most trusted of Katsuki Herders, young grasshopper,” Phichit said, waving a finger as he slid off the bed. “With great power comes great responsibility.”

“Please don’t mix references this early in the morning,” Yuuri said.

Victor looked puzzled. “I don’t understand. Who’s this ‘grasshopper’, and what do they have to do with you getting up?”

“It’s a what, not a who, you know, a—crap—a batta.” Wiping sleep out of his eyes, Yuuri squinted at the light filtering in through the blinds and fumbled around on the bedside table for his glasses. “It…hops. In the grass.”

“Oh, like a bunny!” Victor said.


“Babes, as much as I’m enjoying this conversation, it’s ten thirty am, and time is ticking,” Phichit said, clapping his hands. “Get your amazing asses out of bed, because we’re going partying tonight and I need a replacement for my Fuck-Me Jeans before that asshole Keaghan slides in on the cute hockey player I’ve set my heart on.”

“Pfft, which one?” Yuuri said, settling his glasses on his nose and glumly contemplating the prospect of standing up. “You’ve gushed to me about at least three of them in the last week.”

“Martin,” Phichit said dreamily. “You know, blue eyes, blond hair, great abs, pretty sure you blew him at a frat party once.”

Yuuri immediately pulled the duvet back over his head, face burning. “Phichit! Why would you say that in front of my fiance?”

“I don’t mind,” Victor chirped, leaning forward to squish him in a hug. “After all, I told you all about the fun I got up to when I would go clubbing with Chris and Mila. And besides, I know how much you like—”

Yuuri turned to slap a hand over his mouth. “No! No! Bad Victor! This conversation is over! We’re getting up now, let’s go get Phichit some new jeans, quick, hurry, time is wasting.”
“I wouldn’t worry anyway, Victor,” Phichit said, with the shit-eating grin Yuuri had long since come to fear. “I’m pretty sure Yuuri only hooked up with him because he kinda looks like he’s your shorter, less-pretty cousin.”

“Aw, solnyshko,” Victor said, cuddling him to his chest like a large, disgruntled Makkachin. “It’s okay. You don’t have to settle anymore. You can blow the real me when we go out tonight! I’ve never been to a college party and it sounds like so much fun!”

“I’m a good person,” Yuuri said in a monotone, sliding bonelessly into his husband’s lap. “I’m nice to dogs and strange old ladies in forests. Why am I cursed like this?”

“It was the teapot,” Phichit said wisely. “I told you not to buy it, Yuuri. That thing’s hella creepy.”

“Please never say ‘hella’ again.”

“Only if you get out of bed and come shopping with me.”

“Can I come? I love shopping. And my Yuuri needs a new tie, because the one—and no man should own only one—he has now is an abomination.”

“I know, right? I’ve been trying to get him to ditch that thing for years.”

Yuuri sighed, a long drawn out noise that still did not manage to convey the breadth of his disappointment in his friend and husband. “Fine. But you’re buying me coffee.”

phichit+chu

[image: a selfie of Phichit Chulanont, Yuuri Katsuki, and Victor Nikiforov at a Starbucks with a number of bags and matching knit animal hats. Phichit’s is a hamster, Yuuri’s is a unicorn, and Victor’s is a dog. Phichit is beaming and flashing a peace sign, Victor has one arm around Yuuri and is pouting in a way that should be absurd but somehow manages to be beautiful, and Yuuri is taking the opportunity offered by the two selfie fanatics’ distraction to sneak a sip of Victor’s strawberry creme frap.]

47.6k likes
Victor is sulking because Yuuri won’t give him the unicorn hat.
#katsudon-y #v-nikiforov #dayoffdayout #hamsterprince #nikifawoof #thelastyuuricorn #detroitboys

telvanni-toadstool tag urself i’m yuuri

ThursdayAdams For real, though, that is an amazing hat and I want one. Where are they selling these?

YUURI-CATSKEY this is so soft and pure we have been blessed

borkbork Those are the lamest hats I’ve ever seen.

General_Organa @borkbork I bet you wear a fedora, huh?

yuri-plisetsky Seriously, do you guys ever train?
**yuri-plisetsky** btw @katsudon-y if they have a cat one grab it and send it to me

**katsudon-y** sorry, @yuri-plisetsky, but I already got you a moose one. You can wear it when you skate your new exhibition. Show your love for the great country of Canada and its denizens.

**MilaBabe** @katsudon-y he just screamed and threw his water bottle at Georgi. I’m so proud. I always knew Victor had good taste in men.

**katsukife_official** @viknik01 @vnikiforovfe !!!!!! did Mila Babicheva just confirm Victuuri??!!

**sukeota3sisters** @katsudon-y bring @v-nikiforov to hasetsu please! you owe us!

**v-nikiforov** @sukeota3sisters I’ll make sure he does! : )

**sukeota3sisters** !!!!!!!!!!!!!

“You know, if you won’t give me the hat, dorogoy, I will just have to take it.”

“Vitya! Unicorns don’t steal,” Yuuri laughed, dodging the hands trying to pull his new hat from his head as they walked back up the stairs to the apartment. “Unicorns are pure. If you want the hat you have to be worthy of it.”

“But Yuuuuri,” Victor said, expression more adorably pleading than Makkachin begging for steamed buns. “It’s sparkly.”

“You have an entire room full of gold medals; you’re sparkly enough already,” Yuuri said.

“Yuuuuuuuuri.”

“No. My hat. My head. Those are the rules.”

Something impish sparked in Victor’s blue eyes at that. Yuuri stepped back, hands rising to protect his head.

This was a mistake, as it turned out. Victor, with a speed that bordered on the inhuman, darted forward and grabbed his waist instead, heaving him into the air. “You’re my Yuuri!” he crowed, looking appallingly smug. “So it’s my hat now! Property of transference, those are the rules!”

“This is not very unicorn-like behaviour,” Yuuri said.

Phichit laughed so hard he snorted, and took another photo.

**phichit+chu**

[image: a mirror selfie of Phichit Chulanont and Yuuri Katsuki in sinfully tight jeans and off-the-shoulder crop tops, orange and dark red, respectively. It is an objectively masterful shot, and its artistry is matched only by the perfectly manicured arch of Phichit’s eyebrows and the knife-sharp edge of his winged eyeliner.]

39.8k likes
Ready to party with the bestie! Think you can keep up, @v-nikiforov?
#katsudon-y #croptopboys #partyatsigmaphi #pre-pregameselfie #toohotwontstop
martin_leverman oh shit y’all, the beer pong dream team is back on campus, and I want a
rematch, @phichit+chu. I have to defend the honor of the hockey team.

phichit+chu bring it on, @martin_leverman, because you’re going down.

cristophe-gc someone always is. ;) By the way, @phichit+chu, please party responsibly,
because that ass in those jeans could kill a man and I wouldn’t want you to get arrested.

martin_leverman Imao I’ll keep an eye on him

cambodian-holiday too late I am deceased hot damn boi

KatsukiAppreciation OKAY BUT YUURI IN A CROP TOP THOSE JEANS THAT HAIR
THAT GODDAMN 8 PACK I ASDFDIKSDFJKALJD

fignewtons cradle I’m stuck here in engineering hell and the professional athletes still have time to
party wtf

eyelashout @phichit+chu please tell me who you killed to get those make-up skills because I’m
willing to do what it takes to attain them

yuri-plisetsky why did I open insta today

yuri-plisetsky why

private message between phichit+chu and martin_leverman

martin_leverman srsly tho, that Christophe guy is right, you look really great

…

martin_leverman Christophe Giacometti, he’s another figure skater, right?

martin_leverman like, u two hang out a lot?

phichit+chu haha, no we’ve never even met in person! He’s mostly Yuuri’s friend. He’s just
really open about his opinions. With everybody. His boyfriend’s like the chillest guy I’ve ever
seen.

martin_leverman Imao, I know a guy or 2 like that! :) I’m looking forward to our rematch!

private message between phichit+chu and @christophe-gc

phichit+chu Christophe, I’m nominating you for wingman of the year and I’ve never even seen
you irl

@christophe-gc We shall have to change that, mon ami. And call me Chris.
Yuuri insisted on doing shots at the apartment before they went out, because the crush and chatter of parties was much easier to handle through the giggling bright haze of light intoxication. And partying with Victor, well—

“Drunk Yuuri! Drunk Yuuri!” Phichit cheered, slamming back his own shot and beaming at Victor. “Nikiforov, you’re gonna die. You are not prepared for Drunk Yuuri. No one is prepared.”

Victor just gave him that heart-shaped smile and continued what he was doing, which was apparently trying to murder Yuuri because no man should look so good in a plain white v-neck and those jeans should be illegal holy shit please give me the strength not to jump him in front of god and everybody.

“Don’t worry, I like surprises,” Victor added, casually tucking his hands in Yuuri’s back pockets and leaning over his shoulder. Warm breath tickled his ear. “Right, pryanichek?”

Yuuri was going to die.

“I’m going to need another shot,” he said, finally. He paused. “Make that two.”

Wayne State Yik Yak

HOT CINNAMON ROLLS
At the Sigma Phi House. V. Hot. Do not touch, or like Icarus, ur wax wings will melt and you will perish. U have been warned.

10min

holy mother of god that’s a cinnamon roll
I was not prepared
9 min

There’s some Russian honey cake there too goddamn
that is one beautiful dessert
8 min

I think they’re a package deal, ya’ll
3 min

the official dessert photographer has been silent on the subject
but I think we all know
3min

I think cinnamon rolls are officially off the menu, boys
we can only hope they went to someone worthy of their goodness
and, of course, make sure our precious rolls are not harmed
we’re watching you, Russian Honey Cake
respect the Roll
or else
2 min

party at sigma phi tonight!

20 min
Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
i have no idea what hopskip is but it tastes gooood

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
like I just watched @badger_boy make it but I still don’t understand?

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
is it beer? is it liquor? is it fizzy? is it mysterius orange slush?

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
man i love college

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
*hi sponsors! all onions related to alchohol are those of my 22 year old 100% legal bestie @katsudon-y and not my comptleely sober self

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
right, @katsudon-y?

Katsuki Yuuri @katsudon-y
@phchit yahhh ofc I gave u thsoe onions fresh onions sspicy onions pcikled onions lol

Katsuki Yuuri @katsudon-y
ive got onions for al occasins

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
I meant ‘opinions’ and u know it

Victor Nikiforov @v-nikiforov
@katsudon-y hey qt, r u an onion urself?

Yuri Plisetsky @icetigerofrussia
@v-nikiforov I swear to god if you finish that line I will fly to detroit and end you

Katsuki Yuuri @katsudon-y
@v-nikiforov why bc I made u cry? u said yuod stop bringnng that up. victoooor

Victor Nikiforov @v-nikiforov
@katsudon-y no! its bc u give my life flavor nd it wouldn'tt be complete w/o you! and peple think ur crunchy and spicy but ur actually soft and sweet as well!

Katsuki Yuuri @katsudon-y
..poople think im crunchy?! the fuck im not crunchy. il fkn prove it fite me

Yuri Plisetsky @icetigerofrussia
@katsudon-y bite your thumb at them that’ll show them

Katsuki Yuuri @katsudon-y
gt back to vrona yurio yu fkn montague

Yuri Plisetsky @icetigerofrussia
@katsudon-y lol nerd
Chris was finally settling in for the night when his phone buzzed again. Expecting another dm from Phichit Chulanont, who he’d originally started following for the well curated Yuuri Katsuki content and adorable hamster photos, but had forged something of a friendship with over mutual exasperation with their respective best friends, he was slightly surprised—but not displeased—to see it was Victor instead.

NEW MESSAGE FROM: gold medal boy

chris halp
chrissss
yurris too hot an ic ant’ handle it
i
hes wering a crop tp and these *jeans* his ass bozhe moy
I m dead actually ded
this is victors ghost speakng
im gnna haunt those jeans like fukcing akaky akakievitch
fkc overcoats sknny jheans a re wheere its at

Chris let out a faint huff amusement. Honestly, the man was hopeless. How anyone had ever been fooled by the suave playboy act he’d never understand—the man had once tried to pick up the hottest piece of ass Chris had ever seen with an “Do you like Irish playwrights? Because I’m Wilde in bed and I’m Shaw we’d have fun.”

To be fair, it had worked. But only, Chris was certain, because Mr. Hot didn’t actually speak English all that well and Victor’s beautiful blue eyes had been gazing soulfully into his with far more in the way of allure than had ever come out of his mouth.

He chuckled to himself and replied, lifting his chamomile tea from the nightstand and taking a long, relaxed sip.

mmm, yes, I saw the pictures his cute friend posted. 10/10, would 3some now quit being dramatic and go dance with your boyfriend. show him your gold medal routine, if you know what I mean. if you don’t, I certainly will

crhis ilu but if u makka a move on my fiance ill pucnh u in the dick

Chris spat out his tea.

c’est pas vrai?! fiance?

ssshhh its a secert
scret
secrat
dont tell ppl ok
theyll think idid this bc hes the sexiest man alve
nd I wanted to hitt that
nt bc his skating is the best skating of all time
he makkas music wth no musac
unblevable wow amazing
and lik both r tru
but thts noone eleses busienss ok
were the best glod medal husbands
the beest

Victor, on a scale of Paris to Brandenburg how drunk are you right now?
detroioit!!!

well, enjoy yourself, darling, make sure you drink lots of water,
and call me in the morning, okay?
ok!

Chris sat back to digest this tabloid-worthy shocker of a twist—his best friend Victor, skating god,
world’s biggest nerd, Official Lifetime Recipient of the Unnecessary Savagery in the Face of
Honest Questions Award, engaged to Yuuri Katsuki? The shy, blushing, doe-eyed boy who
seemed completely shocked when people mentioned they actually liked him (more than liked, in a
lot of cases) and then turned into an actual succubus when drunk?

Actually, he could kind of see it.

Huh.

His phone buzzed again.

NEW MESSAGE FROM: great ass can pole dance handle with care 11/10
chriote giacometi stop txting my vitya u giant cockbplock

Yuuri, I’m hurt. I’d never cockblock anyone.

im seducing him w my femnine wiles u distrcation
and thats already rly hard bc im a gay
*a guy
but aslo gay lol
lijk
my entrire sxeuality can be defind by how
incredibly gay iam for that man
ha ha dont lagh cris I can see yu
u fkin toblerone
im gonna dance now
no man can resist this tasty bolw of katsudon

Go sweep Victor off his feet, you beautiful drunk pork cutlet bowl.
And congratulations on your engagement.

uh thanks but weve been married for three years?!
haha byeee chris gotta win at beer pong fr vitya
Chris stared at his phone for a full ten minutes before setting it gently on his bedside table and deciding that he was really too sober to deal with this right now.

**martin_leverman**

[Image: Yuuri Katsuki, in his unicorn hat, and Phichit Chulanont holding a hastily scrawled banner proclaiming them ‘UNDEFEETED BEER PONG CHAMPS 2K15’. Victor Nikiforov is hugging Yuuri from behind, nuzzling the crook of his neck. Yuuri’s expression towards the camera is challenging, smug.]

12k likes
You may have won this time, but TEAM HOCKEY TEAM will return stronger than ever before #phichit+chu #teamhockeyteam #goodgame #welostwithdignity

Victor disappeared right after the beer pong tournament. Yuuri, relieved, found him standing the pantry, staring contemplatively at tube of Cheez Whiz.

“How can it be cheese if there’s no cheese in it?” he said, turning to stare at Yuuri with a betrayed expression. “This is what they mean by a crisis of faith, right?”

Yuuri blinked tipsily at him. “I'm Japanese,” he said.

“I know?”

“I don’t eat cheese?”

“I forgive you, though,” Victor said.

Yuuri squinted at him for a moment, and then gently reached out and removed the Cheez Whiz from his hands. Setting it on the shelf, he patted it carefully, and then reached up to cup Victor’s chin in his fingers and turn it towards him. “Vitya, why are you looking at cheese cans when you could be looking at me? Vityaaa, I am the most delicious katsudon. It’s not fair to the cheese. It can’t compete. Stop pity staring at the cheese and look at me.”

“I always look at you, Yuuri!” Victor said, leaning into his hand, tugging at his hat with his fingers. “You're the most beautiful man in the world.”

“Nooo,” Yuuri said, poking his nose. “That’s you.”

“Nope, you!”

“You’re prettier!”

“No, I’m not, you are! My pretty gorgeous beautiful unicorn husband.”

“I’m a unicorn,” Yuuri said, petting Victor’s face, very gently. “But you’re an angel.”

“I love you,” Victor said. “Can I wear your hat now?”

“No, Vitya. Unicorns only.”

Victor sighed, and opened a package of Oreos with the beautiful melancholy of a pre-Raphaelite painting.
**Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu**
The Victuuri mysterious dual disappearance counter is now at: 1

**phichit+chu**

[video: Yuuri Katsuki, complete with unicorn hat, clearly destroying the opposition at DDR. He has the ubiquitous red solo cup full of some mysterious drink in one hand, which he takes periodic swigs from without missing a ‘perfect!’ Victor stands just off to the side, heart-shaped smile on his face, bouncing on his toes and cheering in the unholy mix of Russian, Japanese, English, and the occasional bit of French that he and Yuuri habitually communicate in. His opponent, a lanky boy with more freckles than visible skin, seems simultaneously furious and in awe of Yuuri’s apparently effortless mastery.]

43.2k likes
THE DDR KING RETURNS!!!
#katsudon-y #v-nikiforov #dancedancerevolution #hailtotheking #partyatsigmaphi

**emil-nekola** I’m sorry, did I just hear a challenge to my title? You and me, Katsuki. NHK. DDR tournament after the free skate. Bring it.

**phichit+chu** a new challenger approaches

**phichit+chu** on behalf of my son, who is banned from social media until he sobers up, we accept

**japans-aceofhearts @minami-k** we’re relying on you to get footage of this for the FC

**minami-k @japans-aceofhearts** I won’t let you down!!!

**m-crispino** Good luck, Chulanont. I’m pretty sure Emil is part robot. Your boy can’t win.

**emil-nekola** aww thanks mickey!!

**minako-okukawa** pssh if your robot can beat my beautiful little ballerina I’ll eat my pointe shoes

**Jjleroy!15** Whoa, let me get in on this! I’m amazing at DDR!

**phichit+chu** the king accepts all challenges

**Jjleroy!15** we’re going to have to talk about Katsuki stealing my name

**phichit+chu** u want it back? win at ddr then, maple syrup

**Jjleroy!15** bring it hamtaro

**phichit+chu** JJ Leroy, closet weaboo and DDR peasant? Tune in to the NHK Trophy to find out!

**sallycow** guys I am so here for this showdown

**mr+elephante @sallycow** ikr?
Yuuri Katsuki sober was excellent at DDR. Yuuri Katsuki drunk was unbeatable. And, of course, since he was drunk and in love and willing to fight for it, when a cute freckled boy started hitting on Victor the obvious solution was to challenge him to a match for his husband’s hand.

It…had seemed logical at the time.

It seemed logical afterwards, too, when Victor was gazing at him like he was the only thing he’d ever thought to want and his mouth tasted like rum and expensive lip balm from frantic stolen kisses in the coat closet and he could still feel the lingering electric nerve-memory of desperate adoring fingers on his skin and the warm wet trail of lips on his hipbones.

He just really, really hoped Phichit was sober enough not to post the photos he’d snapped of them stumbling out into the hallway, hair mussed and clothing dishevelled, matching silly smiles on their faces.

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
The Victuuri mysterious dual disappearance counter is now at: 2

phichit+chu

[Photoset:

image: a selfie of Phichit Chulanont with his arm around a laughing blond boy. They both have moustaches sharpied on their upper lips and are drinking from the same solo cup with two neon krazy straws.

image: Yuuri Katsuki and Victor Nikiforov dancing in a press of bodies and dim lights. Yuuri’s arms are draped over Victor’s shoulders, Victor’s out of view behind Yuuri’s back. Their faces are pressed very close together. It’s not quite a kiss, but it definitely looks like it’s about to turn into one.

image: Yuuri Katsuki, wearing a poorly made paper crown and clearly incredibly drunk, standing in an improbable pose with his left foot over his head and his arms in perfect fifth position en haut. He appears to be sticking his tongue out at someone just outside the frame.

video: a group of party goers playing Mario Kart. The blond boy pictured with Phichit earlier is sprawled out upside down on the floor with a controller in his hands, alternating between looking at the screen and the camera and insisting Phichit come join him. Victor Nikiforov, shirtless, is trying and failing to control Toad and Toadette around Yuuri Katsuki on his lap cuddling him like a human teddy bear and whispering ‘Don’t drink and drive, Vitya, it’s not safe,’ in slurred, heavily accented English. A lean guy in a Triforce shirt is using all the shortcuts and trying to maintain a sense of focus among his competition, growing increasingly irritated with the amount of falls and wall bumping going on. An intense dark-skinned girl is drunk off her face and wiping the floor with all of them.

video: Victor and Yuuri waltzing on the quad, giggling and leaning into one another as though the rest of the world has ceased to exist. They take turns leading, flowing from style to style without pause for words, eyes fixed on each other. A light rain has turned the buildings around them into dark shapes in the mist. Yuuri dips Victor, and the video cuts off abruptly.
Victor in the Unicorn Hat††† princess-carrying Yuuri over a puddle on a lamp-lit street. Yuuri is giggling, arms wrapped around Victor’s neck, head resting on his collarbone. Victor is looking down at him with an expression of open adoration. Rain sparkles in the camera flash.

103.5k likes
It’s not like that between you two, huh, Yuuri?
#likeforreal #justadmititalready #weallknowaboutyourbiggaycrush #weveknownforyears #imadeyoutubevideosaboutit #dontpretenduarentathing #youliterallysleepinthesamebed #itsatwinbed #youhaveconcealerspecificallyforhickies #bcuareliterallyallovereachother #allthetime #uareliterallyalwaysouching #likeforrealyouguys #urnotevensubtleaboutit #victuuri #ilu
#weloveurlove #tostooocutenottobeshared

tangodelamuerte I like how the only way we can tell Phichit is drunk is by the proliferation of tags. And oh boy those tags. Let it all out, @phichit+chu. Your adoring public is desperate for the insight you provide.

Seregil-of-Aurenfae adfsdhalbalsfdal j I need a moment my ship is real the famine is over thank you god and Phichit Chulanont

uhoh-spaghettios shit I wouldn’t even share a twin bed with my gf for more than a night. Like how is that even a reasonable sleeping arrangement? How do they even fit? How do they sleep?

phichit+chu @uhoh-spaghettios like weird codependent octopuses. I think it only works because Victor Nikiforov is like 90% legs and Yuuri is 100% into that.

phichit+chu like have you looked at the man? he’s like if two spiders had a baby and instead of 8 medium legs he got 2 really freaky long ones. But he’s still really handsome? Like wtf Nikiforov? TELL ME YOUR SECRETS?

leo-delaIglesia @phichit+chu how drunk are you right now? You know Yuuri’s going to murder you when he checks Insta, right?

phichi+chu @leo-delaIglesia pfft he’ll be too hungover. It’ll be like fighting a bowl of soggy noodles.

lutzoflove this is almost too much for me to handle rt now. The photos! The dance in the rain (like holy fuck can you get any more romantic cliches in there?)!! The dirty dancing at the party! The fact that they sleep in THE SAME BED CONFIRMED! AND ITS A TWIN WTF? HOW DO YOU SLEEP?? the hickies the cuddles the princess carry the adoring stares I CANT KILL ME NOW NOTHIGN WILL EVER TOP THIS I HAVE ASCENDED

yakov-feltsman VITYA YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE TRAINING NOT GETTING DRUNK WITH HALF-NAKED JAPANESE BOYS!!!

l-baranovskaya *half-naked Japanese ballet danseurs, I believe. The only other person with that decent of a form when completely drunk is Minako Okukawa, probably because she is always drunk.

minako-okukawa @l-baranovskaya That’s my Yuuri, you vodka soaked ice witch. Bet he can take on your little student, no problem

l-baranovskaya I look forward to it, Minako.
Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
The Victuuri mysterious dual disappearance counter is now at: 3 and 1/2

Phichit Chulanont @phichit+chu
like I’m not saying Victuuri is canon, but it’s totally canon.

“PHICHIT!!”

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, Phichit can be kind of a little shit. But he canonically posts embarrassing drunk photos of his friends, and honestly they’ve kind of been jerking him around a lot with the whole surprise relationship my bf is moving in with us and we’re coaching each other thing.

Also, I hc that Lilia and Minako have kind of a rivalry going on; they insult each other all the time but they actually get along really well and meet for drinks whenever they're in the same country.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Victuuri are silly, Yura is shouting, Phichit is wary, the internet is screaming, and Chris is just watching it all drinking tea and proposing threesomes.

Chapter Notes

Wow, sorry for the slow update! My health is an unfortunately fickle thing. But enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Am I even alive?” Yuuri mumbled as he dropped into a chair by the kitchen table, hair still damp from the shower and aspirin just this short of kicking in, squinting into his coffee as though it had personally offended him. Victor, who was some sort of genetically-engineered Russian superman that never got seriously hungover, gently slid a bowl of solyanka under his nose.

“Eat,” he said, pulling the other chair up close enough that their thighs touched and producing two spoons from nowhere. “You’ll feel better.”

Yuuri accepted one and turned his squint to the steaming bowl of thick soup. “There’s not an entire lemon secretly hiding in there, is there?” he said, tentatively scooping up a spoonful.

“I am offended that you think I would ruin my mother’s recipe like that, lubov moya. Itadakimasu!” Victor said, shoving his own spoonful into his mouth and beaming. “Of course, salted lemon is the superior hangover cure, but the last time I gave you some you started crying and accused me of trying to murder you so I could win Worlds.”

Yuuri shuddered faintly at the memory, a faint wave of nausea rising up in his gut. “All I wanted was some miso, like a normal, sane person with working tastebuds.”

“It replenishes the salts, Yuuri. It’s good for you.” Victor tapped the bowl meaningfully.

“I think by the time I was done crying I’d lost any salt I may have regained from that horror.”

“Eh, Yakov used to eat a whole lemon, forget anything else,” Victor said. “Swore by it. I always told him that was why he was so sour, but he didn’t find it as funny as I did. But this—” He took another spoonful and held it to Yuuri’s mouth with a pointed look. He had to admit, it did smell good, at least. “is just ordinary, un-lemoned solyanka. Well, not ordinary. It is the best solyanka! A miracle worker! Better than Yura’s, but don’t tell him that.”

Yuuri gave in under the force of that pleading blue stare and slurped the thick soup into his mouth. Victor did make the best solyanka, after all. Even Yura had admitted it quietly to Yuuri once, when he was sure there was no way Victor could hear.

He still maintained that he was right to be wary after the whole lemon fiasco, though.
Nevertheless, he felt much more human once he set his spoon down after scraping the last dregs from the edges of the bowl, and admitted as much with a grateful kiss to his husband’s cheek.

“See?” Victor chirped, with what Yuuri considered to be unnecessary cheeriness. “I told you. Miraculous!”

“Yes,” Yuuri said, deadpan. “Your cooking has delivered me back from the underworld. I have been gifted the secret of resurrection, and it involves pickle juice and four kinds of meat.”

“You know, I got up early to make this for you,” Victor said, jabbing the spoon at him. “I don’t have to take your sass, Mr. Katsuki-Nikiforov.”

“You like taking my sass,” Yuuri said blandly, reaching across his husband for his coffee cup.

“Oh, someone is feeling better,” Victor said, grabbing the coffee before Yuuri could and taking a lengthy sip, not breaking eye contact. “Well, then, since you’ve recovered, you can get started on the dishes! After all, I cooked.”

Yuuri eyed him for a long moment before rising and carrying the bowl to a sink already full of pots and pans and a vast array of assorted, surely unnecessary, utensils that he was pretty certain he and Phichit had never purchased. “It’s a good thing I love you so much, Vitya,” he said. “Or I would start to question where you even got a garlic press.”

“A gentleman never travels without his garlic press,” Victor said, leaning back in his chair and smirking.

“Really? Because I’m pretty sure you weren’t carrying one last night.” Yuuri said, digging out the washing-up gloves. “And I’m fairly certain I remember checking. Thoroughly. On multiple occasions.”

“I’m honestly surprised you remember at all,” Victor said, rising to stand behind him, arms sliding around his waist, chin settling on his hair. “You were amazingly drunk.”

“Eh, not that bad,” Yuuri said. “That was just college party drunk, not crushing-defeat-at-the-final-mourning-my-dog sixteen glasses of champagne drunk.”

“Your tolerance is a wonder of the world, lubov moya,” Victor said.

“Says the man who apparently has never had a hangover,” Yuuri grumbled, dumping a non-specific amount of dish-washing liquid into the full sink and reaching for a sponge.

“I’m Russian,” Victor said, as if that explained everything.

“So’s Yura. And he’s a lightweight who spends the next two days whining about how sick he is.”

“Ah, well, he’s Moskvich,” Victor said. “They’re weak like that down there.”

Yuuri giggled. “Don’t let Madame Lilia hear you say that.”

“God forbid.” Shuddering theatrically, Victor pressed himself more closely against Yuuri’s back. “She would skin me with my own skates.”

“Probably,” Yuuri agreed, stroking the other man’s calf with his foot. He paused. “Ah…Vitya, did you look at your social media this morning?”

“Did I see Phichit’s little tagging spree, you mean?” Victor said. He sounded more amused than
anything, and Yuuri breathed a sigh of relief. It wasn’t that he thought Victor would be upset
about their relationship being made public—he’d been all for declaring their engagement the
minute he touched down in Detroit—but that Phichit had done it before they’d agreed they would
and that Victor wouldn’t have the opportunity to drop the news himself, well, he could definitely
have seen that being a problem.

Still, he hesitated over the bubble-filled sink, hands fluttering in sparrow-like motions. “Um,
yeah.”

Victor squeezed his waist, nuzzling his hair. “Don’t worry, solnyshko; it’ll be fine. We’ll make our
own post to announce it in a bit. I mean, it’s not how I would have done it, but it was bound to
happen at some point. I’m a little touched by how invested he is in our relationship, actually.”

“Phichit is our number one fan in every universe,” Yuuri said fondly.

“I particularly liked the part about your big gay crush on me,” Victor added.

Yuuri scooped up a handful of bubbles as though on an idle whim, and then turned his husband’s
arms with viper-quick suddenness to smear them on his face. “I’m sorry?” he said. “Is this the man
who flew to all the way to Japan to chase after a drunk he danced with once at a party speaking?”

Victor spluttered, looking like a very betrayed, soggy puppy as he battered at the bubbles on his
nose. “Yuuri, we tangoed. You dipped me. That’s basically a marriage proposal. Everyone knows
that.”

“I mean, I guess it did—” Yuuri began, but didn’t get much further than that as Victor suddenly
grabbed the sides of his head so he couldn’t escape and began rubbing his damp, foam-smeared
face all over Yuuri’s.

“Gaah! Vitya—pfft!—no! I’m sorry! I—haha! I would never—Victor Andreyovitch, don’t you
dare even think about tickling me!”

“Too late,” Victor said.

v-nikiforov

[image: a selfie of Yuuri Katsuki and Victor Nikiforov giggling on their kitchen floor, covered in
dish-soap bubbles, arms around one another. A damp Makkachin is peering into the frame from
the bottom right.]

104.2k likes
Surprise bubble fight with the boyfriend! <3 <3 <3
#katsudon-y #hestartedit #plskatsudothedishes #detroitboys #makka

MilaBabe aww, congrats you two. You look so cute together! <3

v-nikiforov Thanks Mila! <3 We’re looking forward to seeing you at the NHK Trophy!

christophe-gc I’m not sure who to be most jealous of here. Either way, that is one smoking hot
skater sandwich, and if you ever need some extra meat...

v-nikiforov @christophe-gc decent use of metaphor but painfully cliche in execution: 3/10. Step
up your game, Chris.

christophe-ge @v-nikiforov Not in front of the fans, darling. ; )

quad-axel WHAT WHAT WHAT WHAT the most adorable couple on earth is official??!! Someone declare it a national holiday I am screaming

irina-m ugh, Vitya can do so much better. The Japanese pretty-boy can’t even land his jumps. Vitya and Plisetsky are going to skate him into the ground.

yuri-plisetsky @irina-m That ‘Japanese pretty-boy’ has enough artistry in one toe pick to make Yakov Feltsman cry. It would be an honour to skate him into the ground.

lutzoflove guys, I don’t know if you realise this, but Yuri Plisetsky has literally never complimented another skater before. This is crazy! I’m even more excited for Katsuki’s programs at Skate Canada than I was before, and I was stoked as all hell.

victuuri-watch10 god is real.

vicnikFC-official OMG CONGRATULATIONS!!!!! <3 <3 <3

They were sprawled on the linoleum, trying futilely to wipe bubbles from their clothes and Makka’s curly fur, when Yuuri’s phone rang.

“You’re an idiot,” came the greeting in exasperated Russian, the minute Yuuri managed to escape Victor’s grip and answer the call. “You’re both idiots.”

“Hi, Yura!” Yuuri said, grabbing Makka before she could leave a trail of foam through the apartment, and putting him on speaker. “How’s the quad lutz?”

“How’s the hangover?” Yura returned.

“How’s the hangover?” Yura returned.

“Cured with the power of Vitya’s cooking,” Yuuri said, smiling at the man towelling bubbles out of his hair with an expression of rapt concentration.

“I was talking about Vitya,” Yura said.

“Oh, wow. So cruel,” Victor said, fixing his bangs with the kind of precision usually reserved for heart surgery and model ship making. “Especially from someone who lost his world record ten minutes after it was set.”

“Tcha, sheer luck. I’ll have it back by the Cup of China.”

There was the sound of someone viciously slurping something through a straw.

“Yura, please stop drinking your juice boxes on the phone,” Yuuri said, wincing.

“I will if you two stop being stupid and gross all over the internet.”

“I’m not responsible for what Phichit posts. I’m not even sure Phichit is.”

There was an exasperated huff from the other end of the line. “I guess I should have known better than to think you perverts could keep your hands off each other for any reasonable length of time.”
“Ah, innocence,” Victor sighed. “I too remember the days when I thought merely cuddling and gazing lovingly into my husband’s eyes in public was an appalling display of perversion.”

“Nikiforov, you choreographed your not-even-boyfriend-yet a routine based on sexual love for him to perform on international television, while wearing one of your old costumes, that you’d based on bondage and lingerie. And he was all about it. We’re all fucking lucky that Chulanont has some kind of filter while drunk posting, or I’m pretty sure the internet would have way more to talk about than just whether you two are dating.”

“Oh, Yuuri’s skating Eros as his short program this season, too!” Victor burst out, blithely disregarding at least ninety percent of what Yura had just said. Yuuri repressed a smile and gently dabbed foam off his collarbone. “I mean, the kind of routines Celestino has choreographed for his students are alright for Phichit, but my Yuuri is a different class of skater and what he had just wasn’t doing his talents justice. And we can’t choreograph and perfect two brand new programs in a month.” Victor’s grin turned sly. “And frankly, I don’t want to live in a world without plentiful multi-angle high definition recordings of my Yuuri skating Eros. It would be criminal to deprive the fans like that.”

“The fans. Right,” Yuuri muttered, smacking him with the dish towel.

“Okay, that’s it. I’m hanging up.” Yura said. “If you need me, I’ll be in the supply closet, trying to bleach my mind clean of the horrors I have witnessed.”

“Okay. Have fun!” Victor said.

“And don’t mix the cleaning agents,” Yuuri added. “It’s very unsafe.”

“I’m short, not stupid, losers,” Yura said. “Bye now. Try not to embarrass yourselves for one day, okay?”

“Bye, Yura!”

The static silence of a closed line was their only reply.

Victor and Yuuri looked at each other.

“How long, do you think?” Yuuri said after a moment, grinning.

Victor squinted at the ceiling, holding up three fingers dramatically and then lowering them one by one.

Three.

Two.

The phone rang.

“TWO BRAND NEW PROGRAMS?” Yura shrieked from the other end as soon as it connected, without waiting for a response. Yuuri winced and scooted away from the phone, still not entirely over his hangover. “YOU CHOREOGRAPHED KATSUDÔN A NEW FREE SKATE?! AFTER YOU REFUSED TO REDO MINE? YOU ASSHOLE.”

“We both choreographed his free skate,” Victor said, with a blinding heart-shaped smile. “It’s about our love!”

There was dead silence on the other end, and then a very pointed ‘click’, followed by static.
“Ah, zolotse,” Victor said sadly. “I don’t think Yura approves of your theme for the season.”

Yuuri grabbed the cabinet next to him and pulled himself to his feet, holding out a hand to help Victor up after him. “Well, he once declared his theme as ‘Yuri on Darkness’, so I’m going to count that as a win.”

“Well, we were all sixteen once,” Victor chuckled, kissing Yuuri’s fingers before letting them drop and meandering towards the sofa.

“I wasn’t,” Yuuri said blandly, and turned back to the neglected dishes.

Phichit, despite his drunken bravado of the night before, was well aware that he was courting danger when he crept out of his room late the next morning, eyes squinted and scouring the living room for any sign of an irate Japanese skater and his silver haired fiance. He’d heard the shower earlier, smelled the lingering traces of some kind of weird Russian food in the air, and cursed and buried his head in the pillow at the sound of shrieking and giggling from the kitchen at some indeterminate point in time (seriously, did they ever stop?), but the flat seemed blessedly empty.

Phichit breathed a sigh of relief, and slipped towards the kitchen.

“Good morning, Phichit,” Yuuri said from the table, book in his hands, the kind of gentle smile on his face that could only precede the most savage of cut downs.

“You!” Phichit said, trying to project an aura of innocence like unto the purest of sunbeams and rainbows. “How are you feeling? Not too bad, I hope. For real, you were completely wasted last night.”

“Was I?” Yuuri said, smile only growing warmer and more welcoming. “I’m sorry, I don’t remember much.”

Phichit knew that smile. That smile was a trap. It was the soft, bared tummy of a purring kitten before the claws came out, the green beauty of the venus fly trap before it snapped shut on its prey.


“I saw the video,” Yuuri said brightly, pushing his glasses back up his nose. It really shouldn’t have been as menacing as it was. “Thanks for preserving my triumphs for posterity.” He paused, tilting his head. Phichit winced. “And for setting up a dance off on my behalf with Emil and JJ at NHK. On Insta. Where literally everyone in the skating world will know about it. And show up.”

Phichit took a deep breath and decided to bite the bullet. Plunge into the deep end. Confess his sins and seek absolution.

“Don’t worry, you can beat McScruff and Maple Syrup no problem,” he said.

Look, he was working on it, okay?

“I know,” Yuuri said, squinting his eyes slightly like he was surprised the question had even come up. “I wasn’t worried about whether I would win.”

Danger! Phichit’s mind screamed. Self-confident Yuuri was a wildcard. Self-confident Yuuri was Anxious, Over-the-Top Yuuri with the capability to actually act on all those incredibly Extra™
impulses.

And they were always so terrifyingly extra.

“I’m sorry!” he blurted out, in a fit of self preservation. “I was really drunk, and you two are just so cute together, Yuuri, you have no idea! You’re the most adorably in love couple ever and the world needs to know. I can’t be the only one screaming on the sidelines while my best friend gets swept off his feet by his very own honest-to-god Disney prince, it’s just not right.”

“It’s fine, Phichit,” Yuuri said, smiling like an angel. “I should have thought more about your followers. How could I ask you to keep such a juicy secret from them?”

And…there went the fly trap.

Nothing but the truth there, granted; Phichit was well aware of his own unfortunately social impulses, but still. Ouch.

“When did you get this mean?” he grumbled, stepping into the kitchen proper and zeroing in on the still partly full coffee pot. “After I let your fiancé and his giant slobber monster of a dog move in with us, too.”

“You love Makka, don’t lie,” Yuuri said. His expression softened, from threateningly open to genuinely affectionate. “It’s okay, Phichit. Really. It was kind of unfair of us to drop this on you the way we did and expect you to work around it.”

“So, still besties?” Phichit said.

“Besties.” Yuuri nodded, grinning. “And besides, they were really good pictures.”

“I know, right?” Phichit said, grabbing a mug from the cabinet (this one declaring him the World’s Okayest Hamster Dad) and filling it near spilling over with lukewarm coffee. “Speaking of, did you see Chris’ latest picture of him and the new boytoy?” He waggled his carefully manicured eyebrows. “That’s some spicy weinerschnitzel there.”

“I take it back. You’re the actual worst. I’m platonically divorcing you.”

“Yuuri, no. You’ll traumatize the hamsters.”

Skate Canada Discussion Megathread (self.FigureSkating)

submitted 9 hrs ago by quadflipyouoff[M]

Hey skate fans! The second event of the GPF series is coming up in a week and we, your glorious mod team, are stoked. That’s right. It’s time for SKATE CANADA!

This thread is for your predictions, commentary, discussion, and any and all things related to the competition. Remember, anything posted elsewhere in the sub regarding SC will be deleted.

Check the sidebar for posting guidelines, and don’t forget rules one through three: HAVE FUN, NO DOXXING, AND DON’T BE A DICKWAD. YOU WILL BE BANNED. WE MEAN IT.

EVENT BEGINS IN T- 3 DAYS
Edit: Due to the large number of inflammatory comments and flagrant assholery, discussion of the Katsuki/Nikiforov relationship—whatever you may believe that relationship to be—is suspended. Seriously, guys. We’re a skating forum, not a gossip rag.

1043 comments share save hide give gold report

**TOP 500 COMMENTS** show all

**sort by:** best

**MrBlueSky** 842 points 9 hours ago

Well, as far as the Women’s Singles go, Sara Crispino’s the only historically strong skater competing this event. I’m hoping for a surprise, though.

As to the mens, well…guess we’ll find out whether the Nikiforov Midas touch extends to his student/coach/boyfriend/whatever.

Although, I gotta say, Nikiforov’s performance at Skate America was unusually good, even for him.

Like, scary good. It seems like Katsuki might have a career in coaching, even if he chokes on the ice like he usually does.

**littlelegos545** 461 points 9 hours ago

Right? You all know how overrated I think Nikiforov is, but that really was a gold worthy program. Even against Plisetsky. (And can we talk about that beautiful, incredible, amazing, record-breaking free skate from our little Russian Tiger? I mean *wow*. I’ve been a Plisetsky fangirl since he debuted in Juniors, and even I didn’t see that coming.)

**deletethismfs** 35 points 6 hours ago

I’m pretty sure there are going to be at least two Russians at the finals this year..

load more comments (12)

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load more comments (8)

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[comment removed][show child comments]

**itsJStyleYall** 896 points 6 hours ago

Oh boy. It’s been a hell of a season and we’ve only had one competition so far.

So, as always, here’s my analysis of the main Men’s Singles contenders this event:

Michele Crispino: Strong skater, always puts up a good showing. His routines aren’t
groundbreaking, but he’s got the quads and the performance scores for a podium placement. His
twin Sara will be competing in the Women’s, though, which can sometimes throw him off and
sometimes gives him a stronger showing. I have good hopes for him, though.

Georgi Popovich: Everyone’s favourite melodramatic weirdo. His theme this season is “True
Love”—apparently based on his on again off again relationship with ice dancer Anya Kraviskaya.
(Original, Popovich. Real original.) Before Skate America I would have said that the horrifying
glut of emotion he puts in his routines would give him an edge in PC over I-only-have-one-facial-
expression Nikiforov, but…apparently fate is cruel and Yuuri Katsuki is an actual honest-to-god
sorcerer. Sorry, Popovich. With Nikiforov hitting new highs and little Yuri Plisetsky breaking into
the scene like the demon on skates he is, there’s not going to room for any more Russians in the
finals.

Cao Bin: He’s not the strongest skater out there, but he is reliable. He’s never hit higher than
fourth in the finals, but he’s never fallen apart under competition stress like Katsuki and Popovich,
either. And his new choreographer seems pretty good. She did Guang-Hong Ji’s routines for
Juniors this year, too, and they’re looking good.

And, of course, the man you’ve all been waiting for me to talk about—Yuuri Katsuki.

Oh boy. Katsuki. Japan’s Ace. The Skater with the Glass Heart. And a total wildcard. I know
everyone likes to call Nikiforov surprising, but that’s because you haven’t been properly
introduced to this shy little puffball of unmitigated chaos that throws off every single competition
he is in. It’s a historical fact. You think you’ve got the winner pinned? If Katsuki’s in competition,
I guarantee—you don’t. He swipes gold from sure bets and crashes and burns with no apparent
outside stressors. He knocked Chris Giacometti off the podium at Skate America last year with an
absolute tear-jerker of a performance, and then turned around and gave us the most lackluster
program I have ever seen from a professional skater at Rostelecom. The exact same program,
y’all. And it doesn’t stop with his own performances. Michele Crispino once skated into a wall in
the middle of a perfect program because Katsuki tripped over a bench in his line of sight and
turned it into a fucking flawless front handspring (seriously, check out the link. It’s amazing. Boy
could have been a gymnast.). Seung-gil Lee once spite skated to a completely shocking first place
finish because (according to Phichit Chulanont) he though Katsuki had insulted him. (He had not,
Chulanont assures us. It was a linguistic misunderstanding). And the only time Victor Nikiforov
has missed gold in his qualifiers (to Christophe Giacometti, no less) was the one time Katsuki was
competing against him. It could be coincidence. Precedent suggests otherwise.

This boy is a menace, is what I’m saying. And apparently some kind of magical aloof-Russian-
skating-god whisperer, because Nikiforov literally never paid any attention to his competitors
before he upped and flew halfway across the world to coach Katsuki.

As to his actual skating—like I said, unpredictable. He excels in PCS, but only has one quad and
it’s a shaky one at that. I mean, when he’s good, he’s podium good—but he’s not often on top
form. Maybe his new coach-student-bf will change that. We’ll see.

baba_yaga 494 points 5 hours ago

As always, an excellent write up! I just want to add: according to his rinkmates,
Katsuki’s got the 4f now too. I’m not sure if I believe it or not, but…if he ratifies
it this season could get really interesting.

[comment removed]

load more comments (52)
“Vitya,” Yuuri said piteously, voice muffled by what seemed to be at least three layers of knitted scarf. “I’m cold.”

“Really?” Victor said, pocketing his phone and turning to Yuuri. Around them, snow swirled across the airport entrance, lit orange gold by the Canadian sunset. “I think you look very hot.”

Yuuri huffed into his scarf, causing his glasses to fog up and a very adorable crinkle to appear between his eyes.

“See?” Victor said, hooking a finger under his husband’s blue frames and lifting them up slightly. “So hot even your glasses are getting steamy.”

Yuuri glared very seriously at him for a whole two seconds before breaking into uncontrollable giggles. “I really want to know how anyone ever thought you were a playboy, Vitya,” he snorted, wiping his eyes. “I mean, Georgi’s game is better than yours.”

“Well, Georgi has much more practise at it,” Victor said, draping himself over Yuuri’s shoulders and squinting behind his sunglasses towards the road where their car should have been ten minutes ago to pick them up. “His natural charms require him to be the pursuer, rather than the pursued.”

Yuuri barked a laugh, and immediately tried to pretend he hadn’t, what remained visible of his face turning bright red. “Don’t be mean to poor Georgi. He’s suffered enough.”

“And he insists we suffer with him,” Victor sighed, tucking the end of Yuuri’s scarf around his own cold nose. It smelled like home. “He called me the other day, you know. Anya broke up with him again.”

“I didn’t think you were on those kind of terms with him. Not yet, anyway.”

“Ah, well,” Victor said. “He said that since I had ‘made such a grand gesture for sake of true love’ he had realized we were kindred spirits.”

“When are you going to tell him it was really about my ass?” Yuuri said, snickering.

“Zolotse, I’m hurt,” Victor said, cuddling his husband to him, frowning at the distant sound of a camera shutter. “It wasn’t just about your ass. I am also very interested in your book collection.”

“I knew it,” Yuuri said, looking forlorn. “You only love me for my hardbacks.”

“Alas, it’s true.” Giving his most Byronic sigh, Victor gazed out at the darkening horizon, snow glinting in his hair. “I am a weak man for a well-turned phrase in leather binding.”

“Be careful,” Yuuri murmured. “I’ve heard being a bibliophile will get you quite a long sentence.”

Victor tried to cover his sudden ungraceful snort of laughter with a cough and failed utterly.

“You,” he groaned once he had recovered, adjusting his sunglasses and tossing his hair with the patented Nikiforov elegance. “You’re ruining my image.”

“I know,” Yuuri said, cheeks dimpling above his scarf. “I like you better as a person anyway.”

Of course, the only reasonable response to that was to cuddle his husband within an inch of his life, damn his image.
It had never done him much good anyway.

Chapter End Notes

Believe it or not, I was not actually an English major. I just have an unfortunate sense of humor and too many books.

Thank you everyone who has commented, kudosed, or just read and enjoyed the story! I'm having far too much fun with it. (My Very Serious Writer friends have kicked me out of their weekly Coffee and Brooding sessions for being unliterary. I kid, but I do relish the opportunity to be ridiculous in prose.)

Next chapter: Skate Canada, and the debut of On Love: Eros (the world is not prepared) and Yuuri's mysterious new Free Skate (Victor is not prepared)
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

The Short Program at Skate Canada arrives! It's...quite the event.

Introducing the live commentators for the men's programs, one very exasperated ex-hockey player and one very unprofessional professional.

Chapter Notes

I got to thinking about the in-universe commentary during Yuuri's skates in the anime and...it sort of snowballed. Be warned, most of my knowledge of sports commentating is based on Formula 1, gathered by osmosis during my formative years with my die hard Louis Hamilton fan parents, so...artistic license, I guess.

Anyway, thanks for tuning in, and enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Yuu-ri,” Victor coaxed, lingering just in his peripheral vision as he hung up his garment bags in the hotel closet. “Just show me your Free Skate costume. I’m your coach. I need to know if it suits your theme properly. And, frankly, I don’t trust your sense of style after the whole tie fiasco.”

“I told you,” Yuuri said, brushing off the tie comment as he closed the closet door and turned to block any attempts to open it again. “It’s a surprise.”

“But Yuuri,” Victor said. “If I’m distracted by a surprise, how can I properly critique your skate?”

“Well, then, I’ll just have to skate perfectly, won’t I?” Yuuri said. “No peeking, Vitya. I mean it.”

Victor flopped face-first onto the king size bed with a whine. “What did I do to deserve such a disobedient student?”

“Go ask Yakov,” Yuuri snorted, dropping onto the bed beside his husband and picking up the phone he’d set to charge on the side table. “He probably has an entire encyclopedia of your wrongdoings that he’s just waiting to pull out.”

Victor ignored this. “I fly across the world for you—twice!—and you repay me like this!”

“Yes, Vitya,” Yuuri said, dutifully liking a photo of Yura’s cat. “I’m a stubborn asshole. I know. It’s a family curse.”

“Okaa-san would never wrong me like this.”

“Okaa-san helped me with this.” He turned and poked Victor’s cheek affectionately, grinning at the betrayed look on his face. “And she’ll probably cry if you ruin the surprise, so keep your grubby paws away from that garment bag.”
“You let your mother see your Free Skate costume but not me? Yuuri. How could you?”

“Very easily,” Yuuri said. “Oh, by the way, it looks like Sara Crispino and some of the other skaters want to hang out with us tomorrow.”

Victor’s eyes narrowed as he sat up, suddenly distracted from his woes. “Which skaters?” he said, unusually intent.

Yuuri, slightly thrown off by this unexpected change of demeanour, scrolled hastily through his messages. “Uh…Mickey, obviously. Cao Bin, uh, Anya, and some people named Vasilisa, Lidiya, and Chantal? I think one of them’s an ice dancer—there was a girl named Chantal at one of my competitions last year—2014, I mean, this is confusing, isn’t it?—anyway, I just remember because it seemed like she was there every time I turned around and I thought it was weird she wasn’t with her own teammates.”

Victor squinted at the back of the room door, apparently absorbed in the fire escape map, one finger pressed to his lips. “Huh.”

“Huh what?” Yuuri said, twisting his fingers in the sleeves of his jumper and tugging at a loose thread with sharp, jagged movements. “We don’t have to go, if you don’t want to. I really don’t mind.”

Victor blinked, shaking his head slightly. “Ah, no, it’s fine. Don’t worry about it, solnyshko.”

There was a time, years ago and yet to come, before a silver medal turned into matching gold rings, before ‘let’s end this’ became ‘stay close to me and never leave’, that Yuuri would have let it drop. Would have buried the words and let them roil in the poison of his anxious mind until they became just as corrosive and bitter as they were supposed to be kind. And they were supposed to be kind, he knew, for all that they set off alarm bells in the frantic over-analytical pathways of his head.

Fortunately, the Yuuri with five years that had never happened under his belt had panicked at enough of Victor’s tears and snarks and idle statements to learn the value of communication.

“Vitya,” he said, quiet but firm, solid earth under a layer of snow. “If I wasn’t worried before, I definitely am now. Please tell me.”

“I guess I could have phrased that better,” Victor said, looking faintly annoyed, though whether with himself or Yuuri that latter couldn’t quite tell. “Really, it’s nothing important. Just something I remembered.”

“Okay, so just tell me and if it’s not that important it’s fine,” Yuuri said, trying to keep the frustration out of his voice. “But if you keep circling around it I’m just going to spend the next few days worrying about what you’re not telling me and messing up my jumps because of it. And I have a gold medal to win.”

“What? Oh, no, solnyshko, that’s not…” Victor said, irritation fading into something soft and warm that soothed the flare of nerves in his chest. He held out his arms in silent apology, and Yuuri shifted into his embrace, wrapping his own arms comfortably around his husband’s waist and tucking his head into the crook of his neck.

Victor, Yuuri knew, fought his battles with hollow absence and ennui rather than the dizzying barrage of what if and I can’t and too much, and had never really understood the way that doubt and fear refracted every other emotion and could twist the meaning of any thought they dug their claws into—but he always tried, and never judged, and Yuuri loved him so, so much for that.
“I was literally just thinking that—well, you remember the Cup of China, first time around?”

“How could I forget?” Yuuri said, still unsure of where this was going. He propped his chin up on Victor’s shoulder and squinted suspiciously at him.

Victor grinned. “I’d be very offended if you had, lubov moya. Anyway, you remember that there were those two women’s singles skaters who kept sniffing at my heels and whining ‘Vitya, come back to the ice’ every time I turned around? That was Vasilisa and Lidiya. Very unpleasant women. I think Sara only hangs around them because they annoy her brother, honestly.”

Yuuri hummed quietly. “I mean, if they upset you that much we don’t have to go, I was serious when I said that.”

“Eh, I was more concerned that—well, they did not speak entirely flatteringly of you before.” His voice took on a slightly dangerous, mocking lilt. “After all, I am Victor Nikiforov, and my only place is on the ice. It is not possible that I could enjoy coaching. It is not possible that you could be a better skater than I ever was. It is not possible that I could love you more than I love winning myself. And if I did, well, then you…” He sighed, very quietly, nuzzling into Yuuri’s hair. “It doesn’t matter. You gave me a much better sort of gold, anyway.”

Yuuri tilted his head up, taking in the weary tension and old bent-metal pain in Victor’s blue eyes, the almost-too-tight arms wrapped around his waist and the soft stutter of the world’s most precious heart under his fingers. Thought about billion-rouble smiles and screaming crowds and a boy tearing himself to pieces in the silence of an empty rink because that was all he knew how to do.

“Well, then,” he said, catching Victor’s face in his hands and pressing a firm kiss to his nose, and then forehead and cheeks for good measure. “I guess I’ve got some world records to break.”

SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

MICHAEL LETHERMAN: Hello, everybody, and welcome back to Skate Canada! We’re here in snowy Lethbridge, Alberta, at the second event of the Grand Prix Series, ready to see the Men’s Single skaters take the ice. And what an event it seems to be—phenomenal turnout this year, just look at that crowd. I haven’t seen such excitement from my home country since our very own Alain and Nathalie Leroy’s final Olympic season.

TIMOTHY O’BRIAN: They’re coaching their son now, men’s single skater Jean-Jacques—uh, ‘JJ’—Leroy, right, Mike? He took silver at last year’s Skate Canada, if I recall. A very promising young man. Lots of personality. Lots of quads. A lot in general.

MIKE: Yes, ah, indeed. But what else can you expect from a Leroy, eh? I’m sure looking forward to seeing his new programs at the Trophee de France.

TIM: If his trend from last year continues, he’s shaping up to be some real competition! And speaking of new programs, this is the first time we’ll be seeing a skater besides Victor Nikiforov himself performing a routine choreographed by the living legend. Honestly, I never thought I’d see that happen—I know for a fact that half of the skating elite have been hounding him for years to choreograph for them, but I guess Nikiforov was looking for something very special for his programs and none of the others had it.

MIKE: Ha, and I’m sure I join the entire world in wondering what exactly that special something
might be! What did Victor Nikiforov see in unassuming Japanese representative Yuuri Katsuki that caused him to drop everything and throw us all into an uproar—

TIM: And what an uproar, good lord. You know, there was me thinking the infamous stripping exhibition skate was bad—or good; this is Canada, we don’t judge—and then Nikif—

MIKE: Ah, ha, well, Nikiforov has always been one for surprises, eh, Tim? And hopefully today will be another, as we watch his coaching debut and see what, exactly, he’s been working on with Japan’s elusive Ace.

TIM: Elusive is right! Katsuki is notoriously camera-shy—maybe we should be calling him Japan’s Cryptid, instead. Yeti Katsuki has a nice ring to it. The Abominable Skate-man. El Ch—

MIKE: Tim, please. [off mic] Guys, if you’ve never worked here before, this is what we call Threat Level Timothy, which means please be on standby to mute any unprofessional comments that may arise.

TIM: Okay, okay, although lately it seems—ah, here’s Georgi Popovich and coach Yakov Feltsman at the rinkside, getting ready for Popovich’s short program. He’s up first in this final group, going up in a few minutes, and—oh, wow, that’s a very, uh, interesting costume choice. Very…pink.

MIKE: It’s certainly very striking.

TIM: Well, it’ll make lovely disco ball when he’s done. And, oh, I’m given to understand it’s an homage to his own coach’s 1961 Exhibition Skate, which, I recall, made waves in the community for it’s more…dramatic elements and the inclusion of an on ice proposal to the then rising star of the Bolshoi Ballet, Lilia Baranovskaya. An iconic moment in figure skating history, and a great disappointment for those of us who—

MIKE: [coughs pointedly into the mic] Ahem, well, Popovich has said his season’s theme was inspired by his relationship with ice dancer Anya Kraviskaya.

TIM: Ah, yes, his theme is the perennially uninventive, ‘true love’, I believe?

MIKE: A popular choice again this year, it seems.

TIM: You know, I thought Kraviskaya broke up with him. [off mic] Not that I blame her in the least. Guy’s like the love child of Heathcliff and Edward from Twilight.

MIKE: Hah, uh, well, let’s see if Popovich can overcome that and skate to true love as he takes to the ice for his Short Program.

TIM: And here we go. Heeeeere’s Georgi Popovich, representing Russia, skating to ‘Salut d’amour’ by Elgar. His program was choreographed by Yakov Feltsman…

…

MIKE: …triple axel, nice and clean, a good start.

…

TIM: Ooh, not enough rotations on that salchow, that’s disappointing…and here comes the choreographic sequence, very nice, very…emotional…you know, I respect a man who’s not afraid to cry on camera…
TIM: Flying sit spin...oh, no, he didn’t give himself a black eye, did he?

MIKE: I think that’s just his eyeliner, Tim.

TIM: Oh my god. He’s like the front man for a middle school Evanescence cover band. Bring it to effing life, Popovich.

MIKE: You’re still live, you know.

TIM: Shit.

MIKE: Still live, Tim.

[note: the crew was able to edit all profanity out of the broadcast, and I am recommending bonuses all around for the quick response ]

TIM: And that was a solid short program from Russia’s Georgi Popovich! Now we’re just waiting for the scores.

MIKE: Well, Coach Feltsman’s going in with his usual critique in the Kiss and Cry—you know, it’s no wonder the Russian team is so consistently good, Feltsman has a way of bringing out the strongest in his skaters. I wouldn’t want to be on the receiving end of one of those lectures, though.

TIM: A coach to make history, for sure. I believe that—ah, the scores are in. And it’s 87.3 for Georgi Popovich, Russia! He is currently in first place.

“...This outfit is always so perfect on you, zolotse,” Victor murmured, as he finished zipping up the back of Yuuri’s Eros costume with deliberate slowness and far more in the way of lingering touches than was strictly professional.

The kisses he peppered on his shoulders and neck as he went were definitely not professional.

“You just like the idea of me wearing your clothes in front of everyone,” Yuuri said, shifting back against him.

“Da,” Victor said, undeterred. Victor had no shame. “But it is not just that.” He leaned forward, breath warm by Yuuri’s ear, voice a low rumble, syrup-sweet and slow. Yuuri melted into it.

“You are stunning, lubov moya. You never had to tell me to keep my eyes on you, you know. I couldn’t imagine ever looking away.”

And there, with the roar of the competition dull through the dressing room walls and the chatter of other skaters just outside, Victor whispering heated words into the curve of his neck, clever fingers leaving trails of sparking sensation through the mesh of his costume—and, oh, that costume, fitted like an old friend and full of the kind of magic that bleeds late nights and bad decisions—Yuuri felt a familiar sense of kiss-red mischief slip over him like a second skin.

He smiled. It scorched.

“Oh, I know,” he purred, turning, slow, all liquid grace and litheness, and twining his husband’s
tie around his fingers before pulling sharply. Wide blue eyes met his, pupils hungry inkspot supernovas, cheeks galaxy-freckled and blushing red.

Yuuri thought he could skate a program hot enough to swallow suns on the strength of that look alone. “You’re mine, Vitya. And when I’m done skating today, everyone else is going to know that too.”


Yuuri smiled and drew him in for a deep, desperate kiss, all promise and want and heat—before breaking off suddenly and patting Victor’s cheek. “I’ve got to go and finish stretching now,” he said, halfway to the door with skate bag in hand before Victor recovered enough to react. “I can’t skate my best if I’m all stiff, right, coach?”

He tossed a wink over his shoulder for good measure.

Victor’s stunned, breathless, “Yuuri” followed him out into the hallway like a prayer and its answer, all in one.

**SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)**

TIM: And the score for Freidrich Eulenspiegel: 73.5. A bit of a disappointment for the German representative, we’ve seen much stronger performances from him before. He is currently in third place, behind Georgi Popovich and Jules Dumas.

MIKE: And next up, it’s the pride of Italy, a strong skater with a powerful presence on ice… Michele Crispino!

TIM: He cuts quite the figure, huh? [off mic] You know, I heard he and Emil Nekola—

MIKE: [off mic] This is an official broadcast, not your knitting circle, O’Brien.

TIM: [off mic] Fine, fine. Killjoy. [on air] And it looks like his sister is here to cheer him on after her events earlier! Sara Crispino, a fellow skater, she’s currently in second place after the women’s short programs, behind Lidiya Anatovia. An excellent showing today from the ladies, if you were watching, some lovely, lovely skating. Absolutely stunning. I recommend you check out the recordings, it’s definitely worth your while.

MIKE: Well, we’re about to see if her brother can match her achievement today. I believe his theme this year is ‘chivalry’, which is, uh, charmingly old fashioned. Very Arthurian.

TIM: Very patriarchal, if you ask—

[note: again, thank you to the techs for judicious use of the mute button.]

MIKE: —Aaaand turning back to the skating, which we are paid to comment on, Timothy, Crispino is getting ready to take the ice. We had a good showing out of him last year, a strong season for the Italians all around, really. He was, what, fourth in the finals, not bad when you’re up against Victor Nikiforov.

TIM: Right? These days a silver’s as good as gold, and fourth place is definitely worth a smile or
two. [off air] Not that Scowls McGee knows anything about smiling, though.

MIKE: Hmm, indeed—ah, here we go, he’s taking a quick lap around…nice costume, very nice, understated but elegant. I might have to get his designer’s contact information.

TIM: Thinking of getting back in the old skates, eh, Mike?

MIKE: I don’t think that’d go over well on the hockey rink, ha. No, I’ve hung up the blades for good. Of course—okay, here we go. Ahem. Please welcome…Michele Crispino, Italy, skating to ‘Tristan’s Lament’ from ‘Le Morte d’Arthur’!

TIM: Wasn’t Tristan the guy who had an affair with his uncle’s wife? Not a great choice for a theme of ‘chivalry’.

MIKE: Really, Ti—okay, anyway, here comes the first jump—should be a quad toe—yep! Excellent height there, look at that, incredible.

TIM: Good landing, too. He’s always done well with that jump.

…

TIM: And now the step sequence…

MIKE: He’s very stiff on that, could be an artistic choice though, you know, quite knightly.

TIM: A very bad artistic choice.

MIKE: Uh, we’ll have to see what the judges think on that one, Tim.

…

MIKE: Ah, there’s the triple-lutz, triple-loop! Nice. That’s his sister’s signature, right?

TIM: Yes, she landed a wonderful combination earlier. And—oh, that was a lovely sit spin, absolutely lovely.

…

TIM: And that’s a beautiful performance from a beautiful skater! Michele Crispino!

MIKE: I admit, I’m quite impressed. It’s shaping up to be another strong season for Italy.

…

TIM: And the scores are in: 91.2 for Michele Crispino! He’s currently in first place, ahead of Georgi Popovich!

Yakov nearly ran nose-first into Vitya and his…skater…as they rounded a sharp corner, heading for the rinkside that Yakov had just left behind. His erstwhile student, he was displeased to note, did not look in the least bit distressed by the surprise encounter. Neither did Katsuki, who, hair slicked back and sans glasses and any of the soft sweetness that had so marked him before, merely gave him a stare that could burn through steel and waited for him to move.
He’d laughed (or as close as he ever managed, anyway, which was a not-entirely-disapproving scoff) when Georgi had drunkenly called Katsuki ‘the most terrifying man who ever made you genuinely question your sexuality’. Katsuki was a lot of things, but terrifying had never been one of them.

He was…beginning to get it. He wasn’t into that sort of thing, but if you were…well, he guessed Katsuki had a certain presence.

And of course Vitya had gone and given him that disgrace of a costume from his Junior days. The one with the…mesh. The mesh that absolutely did not conceal the red bruising marks on his collarbones or the fading bite mark behind his ear.

Christ.

Yakov was too damn old for this.

“I don’t even want to know, Vitya,” he said, before the idiot boy could speak. “Go play coach for your…lover…if you want to. Just don’t get caught doing anything that would disgrace Russia on camera.”

“Watch my short program and tell me that he’s just ‘playing’,’” Katsuki said before Vitya could give an insouciant, insincere reply, eyes hard, voice soft. Quiet. Measured. Obsidian layered over a whole mantle’s worth of magma, waiting for world to break. “Vitya is a far better coach than anyone else has ever been for me, better than any of you want to admit. I mean, you didn’t even wait to see my skating before you dismissed him. So you’d best go back out there, take a seat, and watch me win, Coach Feltsman, and you can apologize to him when I’m done.”

“I will watch,” Yakov grunted, head tilted, reevaluating once again. “And we will see.”

“You didn’t have to,” he heard Vitya say in a low voice as they walked past him towards the ice. “I’m used to it.”

“That,” Katsuki said, “is exactly why it needed to be said.”

Yakov watched them go, and thought, with the sudden clarity of a clear winter morning after a snowstorm, that maybe Vitya hadn’t made such a terrible mistake after all.

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SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

TIM: Thanks for joining us today at the men’s figure skating short programs, and thanks Canadian Tire for their heh, tire-less support of winter sports here in Alberta! And here’s our next competitor: Japan’s Ace, the skater with the glass heart…Yuuri Katsuki!

MIKE: Ooh, listen to that crowd. Well, I can’t deny we up here are all waiting to see how Katsuki has fared under Nikiforov’s coaching—and he knows it, too. Looking very serious over there as he talks to his coach. It’s well known that Katsuki has problems with inconsistency, and with the whole world watching to see if he’ll live up to Nikiforov’s legendary accomplishments—well!
Any skater would bow under that kind of pressure.

TIM: Aw, well, you’ve always underestimated Katsuki, Mike. Skating isn’t just about jumping around like a kangaroo, after all, and even you have to admit Katsuki’s step sequences and spins are absolutely without equal. Just divine. He was a dancer before he took up figure skating, you know, trained under Minako Okukawa—who won a Benois de la Danse, if that gives you an idea of her skills as a ballerina—and you can see that influence in his movement. Look at that replay from last season—there, beautiful. Wonderfully fluid, it’s like he’s the instrument himself. It’s a travesty that kind of artistry counts for less than the ability to chuck oneself into the air—

MIKE: Yes, yes, quad race, compulsory figures, etcetera etcetera, very divisive subject. But, to continue the impartial, balanced commentary, speculation has been rife regarding the—oh, wow, uh, is Katsuki wearing Nikiforov’s costume from years ago? The one…uh, the one that nearly got him banned by the RSF for being inappropriate on a minor? Wow. Um.

TIM: Wow is right. That is a…a major shift in style for Yuuri Katsuki, and—yeah, okay, I’m gonna say it again: wow. Yeah, yeah, I can hear you whistling out there, Katsuki fan club. You guys know what’s up. Throw some roses out there for me.

MIKE: For fu—okay. I guess Nikiforov is just kind of taking the boyfriend shirt idea to its logical —[pause, unintelligible whispers from the ISU liason]. What? Okay. Okay. [deep inhale] That is to say, it’s a lovely tribute to his coach from Katsuki, wonderfully symbolic of their mutual professional admiration. [off mic] Seriously, Jan? Nobody believes that shit. They’re clearly—no, no. I understand the ISU’s regulations on the matter. “No speculation on the sex lives of the skaters, doubly so if it’s scandalous, triply so for Christophe Giacometti.” I know, Jan, slander suits are expensive, you never stop telling me. Stop being a censor and let me get back to the commenting you lot pay me for. Hey, Tim, you clear on all that?

TIM: [off mic] Yup. [on air] Katsuki and his coach are now gripping each others hands in a manly, brotherly hold over the boards, having some last minute words of completely platonic camaraderie before time starts…

MIKE: [off mic] For fuck’s sake, Tim.

TIM: …gazing heatedly into one another’s eyes as only the most heterosexual of bros are known to do—Okay, okay, there he goes, Katsuki’s taking the ice.

MIKE: [off mic] Thank god. [on air] Ahem. Representing Japan, it’s…Yuuri Katsuki! He will be skating to ‘In Regards to Love: Eros.’. His routine was choreographed by Victor Nikiforov.

…

MIKE: He’s said he’s attempting to portray the embodiment of sexual love in this program, which isn’t something I would have th—holy -BLEEP-

TIM: Wow, wow, that was…

MIKE: Unexpected. Very…unexpected. Uh. [off mic] shit, how am I supposed to describe that?

TIM: [off mic] How about ‘incredibly fucking hot’?

MIKE: [off mic] Well, I guess we were all thinking it.

…

TIM: Now into the step sequence—oh my god. That step sequence, just…mmm. Incredible. You
know, I usually say Katsuki moves like an angel but I think today ‘demon’ might be more appropriate—every movement just oozing pure seduction—[sighs] gorgeous.

MIKE: I’m actually—not put off by the in your face sex appeal here. You’ve all heard my statements on how I think a lot of skaters go too far into the raunchy in the quest for PCS and it’s more embarrassing than alluring, but…I think Katsuki is succeeding on a level we haven’t seen from many others. Suggesting, rather than blatantly displaying. There’s an almost feminine element to it—Katsuki is playing the siren, and not the Lothario. And, uh, judging from the crowd’s reaction, it’s working.

TIM: Oh my god, look, that transition—here we go, into the camel spin, just…so fluid. Look at that beautiful man. Look at him.

MIKE: [laughter] I guess Tim’s a fan too.

…

MIKE: He’s saved all his jumps for the second half, a risky move for anyone but Katsuki’s on fire today—

TIM: Pretty sure the entire audience is on fire! Whew! Is this why you wear all those baggy sweaters in interviews, Katsuki? To contain all this eros?

MIKE: AND MOVING ON, we’re going into the first jump, a spread eagle into a triple axel…that’s always been his strongest jump, aaand—he nails it. Beautiful.

…

MIKE: Quad salchow next, he’s never landed this in competition but I expect—yep! Another perfect jump!


…

MIKE: Okay, the last jump is a combination—quadruple toe loop, followed by a triple toe loop—and, wow, this late in the program, is he insane? Here it comes—oh! He nailed it! Gorgeous! And the last choreographic sequence, here we go. You can just feel the story in his movements, it’s mesmerizing. Here the dance of seduction comes to an end, the lover is cast away and the beautiful siren moves on to her next conquest…ah, a perfect ending for a perfect program.

TIM: Flawless. Beautiful. Unbelievable. What an amazing performance. Absolutely unholy stamina, this man, to land his quad-triple combo at the end…just…is he even real? And do you think he’d go out to dinner with me? Hey! Hey, Katsuki! You wanna get sushi?

MIKE: AND THE CROWD IS ON THEIR FEET FOR A STANDING OVASATION! They’re going wild, cheering so loudly I can’t hear us on the speakers, which is nice because I’m pretty sure Tim just tried asking out a professional skater with a very famous, very present boyfriend on live television and I just…I just…this…guys, I… I miss commentating hockey. Everything was so sane and nice and you only had to deal with people fighting and not…whatever fucking crazy-ass shit is going on here.

MIKE: [off mic]…uh, yeah, thanks for muting that last bit, techs. You’re the real professionals here.

TECHNICIAN: Hey, no worries, okay, Mike? Seriously, take it from me, hand to god, it’ll all be
fine. Things’ll settle down once we’re further into the season. And in the meantime? Ratings through the roof. Bonuses all around. Win-win situation. So take a breath, drink some water, and then you’re going do what you do best and give us the finest damn commentary in the whole Grand Prix.

MIKE: [off mic] Thanks, Alejandro. You’re a lifesaver.

…

MIKE: Okay. Okay, well, that an incredibly powerful, surprising performance from Yuuri Katsuki! The crowd is going insane; it’s a madhouse in here, absolutely deafening! And what an upset for the ages that was—I bet the naysayers are eating their words now, eh? Turns out our living legend is a hell of a coach, and perennial underdog Yuuri Katsuki had more in him that we could have imagined!…This is a level of skating we’ve never seen from him before—dare I say, a level of skating that we haven’t seen from anyone except Nikiforov himself! Absolutely breathtaking! Incredible! What do you think, Tim?

TIM: I think I need a moment, Mike.


…

“Yuuri!” Victor said, rushing to help Yuuri into his skate guards as he came off the ice with trembling legs and an onigiri plushie in his arms, “You were amazing! As your coach, I’m very proud of your performance.” He stood back up and prodded him firmly in the chest. “Although you were a little shaky coming out of that quad sal. Of course, that’s always been your weakest jump, but that’s no excuse.”

Yuuri must have made some kind of absurd face—and, oh god, let it not be caught on camera; he didn’t need to become a meme again— because Victor gave a delighted laugh and then lifted him off his feet into a bone-crushing hug.

“Speaking as your husband, though, while I am of course very proud of you,” he went on, voice pitched low and shaped in purring Russian consonants, his lips brushing Yuuri’s ear, “my main concern lies in dragging you back to our hotel room as soon as humanly possible and doing a great number of absolutely filthy things to you.”

Yuuri buried his face in Victor’s conveniently located shoulder, feeling his cheeks burning redder than the underside of his half-skirt. “Vitya!” he hissed. “You can’t say that sort of thing when I still have to do interviews! Now that’s all I’m going to be thinking about.”

“Good.”

“Vityaaa.”

“Don’t act like you weren’t thinking about it anyway, Mr. Eros.”

“Uh, well, I…” Yuuri pressed his face further into Victor’s shoulder, cursing whatever cruel deity had decided to make him resemble a ripe tomato when embarrassed. “Oh, look. The kiss and cry. We should definitely go over there and wait for my scores and stop talking about this.”

“If you insist, solnyshko.” He smiled, setting Yuuri back down on his skate guards and guiding him towards the Kiss and Cry. Once they were seated, however, squinting at the currently empty
score card, Victor leaned closer to Yuuri, sliding his arms around his waist. “Say, Yuuri,” he said in his ‘I am a terrible man who feeds on his husband’s embarrassment because I have no shame of my own’ voice. “Do you remember our bet about my world records? If you broke them, I promised I’d”—

“Skating, Vitya! We’re at a competition. You’re my coach right now. Yes. My professional, definitely not incredibly hot coach who I in no way just skated a very sexy program for with the intention to seduce, and who is especially not going to go into detail about anything regarding any bets that may or may not exist while we are on—oh, finally. Please tell me the scores, Vitya.”

SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

MIKE: And here are the scores for Yuuri Katsuki of Japan...118.24! Holy—that’s—he just beat his own coach’s short program world record! Unbelievable! What a result! What a program! And Coach Nikiforov looks absolutely thrilled for his student, he practically tackled him the minute he came off the ice, they’ve been cuddled together whispering ever since. I’d give a lot to be a fly on that backdrop, eh? I’ve never seen Nikiforov this happy before! Either of them, really. And—aw, Katsuki’s kissing Nikiforov’s hand. That’s sweet. Look at that smile! And they’ve got a lot to smile about—Yuuri Katsuki will be the man to beat tomorrow, entering the free skate with a hefty lead. Thoughts, Tim?

TIM: I want to be that onigiri plushie.

MIKE: Uh, please edit that out in the broadcast, crew.

TECHNICIAN: No worries, man, we muted him ten minutes ago.

[Note: again, please distribute bonuses to the technical crew]

…

TIM: Mike?

MIKE: Yes, Tim?

TIM: I think I might be gay.

MIKE: No shit.

…

Chapter End Notes
Katsuki Yuuri, patron saint of questioning your sexuality. Now that's canon.
...
I'm so sorry. I don't control the puns. They control me.

And coming soon to an archive near you: Yuuri's mystery free skate!
Chapter Summary

At last, the Free Skate. If you thought this couldn't get any fluffier, you were wrong. This is pure glucose, cloud-grade cotton candy.

Plus bonus Yuri and Otabek shit-talking everyone.

Chapter Notes

I'M SO SORRY FOR THE DELAY!! I kept second guessing myself and this chapter just would not get on the damn page. But it is here at last, and in reward for your patience have 8000 words of sappy skating husbands and, of course, the Return of Tim and Mike, who I am absolutely thrilled that everyone seems to love as much as I do.

We are all Tim on this blessed day.

I am reading all your lovely comments and they make my day every time! I'm a bit behind on replying, but I hope to make some headway on that in the next few days!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever WHAT WHAT WHAT

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever !!!! KATSUKI YUURI JUST BROKE HIS COACH VICTOR NIKIFOROV’S WORLD RECORD SHORT PROGRAM SCORE WITH THE HOTTEST ROUTINE IN HISTORY!!!!!!

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever fite me giaconfetti cakes

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever the heavens have heard our prayers the drought is over #erosyuuri has been released into the world

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever we were not prepared for this blessing

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever But we would like to offer @v-nikiforov a position on our board in thanks for this incredible gift and in recognition of the fact that he is clearly the biggest Yuuri fan of us all

katsukiFC-Official @katuskiforever We would also like to extend both an official membership and a high five to the magnificent @timothy-obrian for his legendary commentary and incredibly relatable reaction gifs. We know, Tim. We know.
Private message between peachy-chuchu and so_katsuDONE

peachy-chuchu: boi

peachy-chuchu: BOI

peachy-chuchu: I CANNOT *BELIEVE*

peachy-chuchu: DID U JUST

peachy-chuchu: DID U JUST FUCKING CURB STOMP VICTOR’S WORLD RECORD

peachy-chuchu: IN YOUR FIRST EVENT OF THE SEASON

peachy-chuchu: SKATING A PROGRAM ABOUT HOW INCREDIBLY THIRSTY YOUR GAY ASS IS FOR YOUR COACH??!

so_katsuDONE: …

so_katsuDONE: …

so_katsuDONE: …yes?

so_katsuDONE: although technically Vitya choreographed that routine

so_katsuDONE: So it’s more like I was skating a program about how incredibly thirsty my coach’s gay ass is for me that kinda turned into a program about how the thirst is mutual and we should totally bang in the locker room before the press conference?

so_katsuDONE: …not that we would do that or anything

so_katsuDONE: it’s a metaphor

so_katsuDONE: 100% not to be taken literally

peachy-chuchu: don’t lie, yuuri, I saw the interview

so_katsuDONE: what interview? 0 _ 0

peachy-chuchu: your post skate interview, obv

so_katsuDONE: I don’t see how that proves anything.

peachy-chuchu: you ran in five minutes late with sex hair

so_katsuDONE: a) my hair was perfectly respectable and b) Vitya had some critiques on my performance and he always takes forever going through them because he’s such a perfectionist

peachy-chuchu: I guess it is hard to speak clearly with a dick in your mouth.
so_katsuDONE: PHICHIT

peachy-chuchu: im crying with pride

peachy-chuchu: my little yuuri has blossomed from a self-conscious caterpillar into the hottest butterfly at the ball

peachy-chuchu: gone from cinnamon roll to *sinn*amon roll

peachy-chuchu: added a whole lotta chili sauce to that delicious katsudon

so_katsuDONE: why are you like this

peachy-chuchu: because my best friend just broke a world record and the internet in the space of two minutes and this deserves to be discussed

so_katsuDONE: you’re not discussing you’re abusing metaphor

peachy-chuchu: ok whatever but have you looked at the skating sites yet?

so_katsuDONE: you know I’m banned from social media during competitions

so_katsuDONE: Vitya even managed to block everything on my phone, like some kind of responsible coach or something

peachy-chuchu: yeah, I showed him how to do that

so_katsuDONE: and now he’s telling me to go to sleep?!?

so_katsuDONE: ewfaoiehsdalk

so_katsuDONE: shit sorry mr professional coach decided that literally lying on top of me was the best way to make me go to sleep

peachy-chuchu: ur fiance is a good egg

so_katsuDONE: a heavy egg

peachy-chuchu: I cannot believe you’re complaining about victor nikiforov lying on top of you

peachy-chuchu: where is my yuuri and what have you done with him

last message read 1 hr ago

so_katsuDONE: things that the ISU definitely never needs to know about

peachy-chuchu: ???

so_katsuDONE: o lol this is victor, yuuri asleep

so_katsuDONE: his phone kept buzzing and i didnt want to wake him up

peachy-chuchu: he’s asleep? PHOTOS, MAN

peachy-chuchu: I’m having yuuri withdrawals
peachy-chuchu: help me, victor, you’re my only hope

so_katsuDONE: [yuuripic491.jpg] how is he real?

so_katsuDONE: he goes from sex god to cuddly and adorable and my heart cant handle it

so_katsuDONE: im shook, phichit

peachy-chuchu: nikiforov, if you don’t post that on instagram I am doing it myself

so_katsuDONE: im offended that u think i wouldnt

so_katsuDONE: yuuri is perfect and the world must know

peachy-chuchu: victor, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship

so_katsuDONE: I thought we were already friends : (

peachy-chuchu: nikiforov, ur my bro, but when u guys get back we’re breaking out the celebratory popcorn and watching everything you’ve missed a reference from, no arguments

so_katsuDONE: lol yuuri already made me watch a bunch of stuff

peachy-chuchu: no offense, but yuuri only watches weird japanese horror movies and like, that one pride and prejudice miniseries

peachy-chuchu: its the blind leading the blind, is what I’m saying. but don’t worry, your friendly neighbourhood pop culture prince is here for you.

peachy-chuchu: btw, while yuuri is sleeping u should check out #katsuDAMN and #erosyuuri

peachy-chuchu: ; ) ur welcome

“Katsuki!”

Yuuri, who had made a daring foray to the ice machine comfortable and—he had thought—anonymous in Victor’s too-big grey hoodie and a surgical mask, jumped about three feet in the air and tried very hard to pretend that he hadn’t.

“Oh, uh, Yakov. Feltsman. Mr. Feltsman,” he said weakly, gesturing at the full pail in his hands. “I was just…getting ice. For. You know. Making things cold. And, uh, less…warm…”

Oh god. He should never communicate with anyone outside his immediate circle after all the noise and stress of competition skates and pretending to be a normal person on camera. He always ended up barrelling past the point where he could pass as a socially capable and likeable human and revealing himself for the sentient pile of dirty socks and Victor Nikiforov t-shirts that he was.

And he had done so well at keeping up the facade in front of Yakov until now.

He sighed and resigned himself to the unglamourous life of a laundry bin. At least his wardrobe wouldn’t need to change.

On the plus side, maybe Yakov would kill him before any of that became necessary.
Yakov, however—and what was he doing accosting innocent sock monsters in hotel corridors anyway? There were plenty of other hallways around, with nice things like lamps and elevators and most importantly a distinct lack of Yuuri Katsuki-Nikiforov—just looked thoughtful.

“Katsuki,” he said again, gruff and glowering but maybe, just maybe, not as antagonistic as their last encounter.

“Mr. Feltsman,” Yuuri said, because he wasn’t sure what else to do besides eye the nearby fire alarm and contemplate a minor felony. “Can I help you?”

Yakov stared at him appraisingly for a long, long minute. “Your quad sal is weak,” he said abruptly. “Tell Vitya he needs to work with you on it.”

“I—okay. I will. Thanks,” Yuuri said, tired and off-kilter but distantly recognizing that an honest critique from Yakov Feltsman was the closest thing to approval that he ever expressed. “He already knows, though,” he added, because approving or not, the man had been unconscionably dismissive of Victor before Yuuri skated his coach into the record books. “He lectured me about it the minute I stepped off the ice.”

“‘Lecture’, he says. In my day, we did not cuddle our skaters while lecturing them,” Yakov grunted. “Still.”

“Still,” Yuuri affirmed, beaming and pushing his glasses back up his nose with the hand that wasn’t holding the ice pail. “We’ll see you at the Free Skate, Coach Feltsman. Tell Georgi we wish him the best of luck.”

Yakov stared at him for a moment, unreadable, before nodding sharply and turning to make his way back down the corridor, back ramrod straight and long coat fluttering behind him.

Yuuri watching him go, chewing thoughtfully on his lip, before heading back to the room he shared with Victor, and the restless, tossing sleep of competition nights.

SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

MIKE: Good afternoon, everybody, and happy Halloween! We’re back at the ENMAX Centre in lovely Lethbridge, Alberta, waiting for the men’s singles skaters to take the ice for their Free Programs! Excitement is running high after yesterday’s incredible showing—I think everyone’s desperate to see what our athletes can pull out to top Japanese representative Yuuri Katsuki’s record-shattering short program. Katsuki starts today’s free skate with a huge lead on the scoreboard, nearly 30 points ahead of the closest competitor, Italy’s Michele Crispino. Still, Crispino’s program has a very high base score—if he lands all his jumps, he could well pull ahead.

TIM: Pfft, in what universe?

MIKE: This one, Tim. You know, the one where the most inconsistent, unassuming skater on the circuit just dropped a record breaking scorcher of a skate on us out of nowhere? Ha, yeah, the folks in statistics are scrambling—I’m certainly not making any more assumptions about where this season will go. Crispino could still pull this off. Especially if Katsuki lets the pressure of living up to yesterday’s skate get to him, something which is not beyond the realm of possibility given
his track record.

TIM: You know, in previous seasons I would have to—reluctantly and disapprovingly—agree with you, but…holy moly, Mike, this is a new Yuuri Katsuki we’re seeing under Victor Nikiforov’s coaching and I’m absolutely certain we’re going to see another unbelievable performance from him today. I can’t wait.

MIKE: Well, we’ve got a whole line up of stellar skaters showing us their best before then, so I wouldn’t count your chickens before they’ve hatched, eh?

TIM: [intensely] I believe in Yuuri Katsuki.

MIKE: [off air] Please keep your giant fanboy crush off my broadcast, Tim.

TIM: [off air] Oh, really? Two words, buddy: Stéphane Lambiel.

MIKE: [on air] And group one is on ice for their warm up. Lots of new faces this year. [off air] I appreciate his skating, Timothy. It’s a strictly professional admiration.

TIM: [off air, as if reciting from memory] “And that’s an incredible ass—axel, incredible axel”

MIKE: [off air] …I cannot believe you remembered that.

TIM: [off air] Remember? Dude, that clip is my ringtone for you. [on air] And that’s the signal for the end of warm up for group one. First up to perform is…

Georgi Popovich, as said man reminded himself daily, squinting into the mirror as he expressed his torment with his make-up brush, was a creature of darkness. He meant it in the sincere, slightly unnerving way of a man not entirely in touch with other people’s reality and well into recreating his own, but the underlying sentiment had more than its fair share of truth to it. Georgi was one of those unfortunate souls cursed to spend their life in the shadow of other, better men, striving and striving and never getting any higher than the ice under their skates. His whole life was a string of bronze medals and rebound relationships and peripherals, of being everyone’s acquaintance and nobody’s friend, and that showed no sign of changing now.

He would be lying if he said he wasn’t bitter about it.

And honestly, he’d thought things were finally turning his way, what with meeting the love of his life, Victor just up and dropping everything to chase after the notoriously stand-offish skater who’d stolen his heart (and when had that happened, exactly? Georgi still wasn’t entirely clear on that), and the next big threat on the scene still in Juniors for another year—he’d been sure it was his turn for gold. Sure, Giacometti and Crispino would give him a good run, but they weren’t invulnerable legends like Victor. And, more to the point, they weren’t invulnerable Russian legends. He’d never play second fiddle to either of them.

It had been nice.

And then Anya had broken up with him again, and Yuri Plisetsky, Yakov’s terrifying teenage prodigy, had kicked and bit his way into Seniors with a program Georgi couldn’t hope to rival, and on top of that it had turned out that Katsuki wasn’t so stand-offish when it was Victor Nikiforov doing the propositioning and whatever outrageous coaching arrangement they’d worked out was planting them both firmly right at the top of the scoreboard.
He couldn’t be entirely mad about that last one. True love was a beautiful thing, after all, and a force to be reckoned with. He’d designed his own programs around it, hadn’t he?

And…seeing Victor now, with Katsuki—well, it was very clear that, whatever their living legend had been before he ran off to Detroit and into his lover’s waiting arms, he hadn’t been happy. And Georgi, a man who wore every minute shift of emotion on his face for the world to see, was slowly realizing that the cold smiles he’d taken at face value for a god admiring the view from above would have stayed just as calm and just as beautiful until the day Victor walked out of the rink and never came back. And for all his bitterness, that was something Georgi would never wish on him.

Still, he was over thirty points behind Victor’s boyfriend after the short programs. Thirty points. In a qualifier. Unbelievable.

It had seemed like most of the watchers had been blindsided by the stunningly seductive presentation of Katsuki’s short. Georgi, who’d once been witness to the world’s dirtiest drunken dance off between Yuuri Katsuki and Christophe Giacometti in a nightclub in Beijing, had just been annoyed and mildly turned on. (Katsuki was hot. Sue him. Nobody was that straight.)

No, that kind of PCS was to be expected from Mr. I-Get-My-Step-Sequences-on-Direct-Order-From-Satan-Himself. What had thrown Georgi completely was the fact that he’d actually landed all his jumps. In the second half of his program, too. And if that continued…

There was no way Georgi was ever going to beat him.

“Coach Yakov,” he said, as he laced his skates up for the second group’s warm up. “I think I’m switching out the triple loop at the end for a quad lutz.”

“Like hell you are,” Yakov snarled, going from calm to enraged in about half a second. “You can’t land a quad lutz in the front half on a good day!”

“I can’t beat Katsuki without it.”

Silence.

“You don’t need to beat Katsuki,” Yakov said, very quietly, after a long, long moment. Georgi looked up, surprised. “This is just a qualifier. You don’t need to get gold to advance. Just…skate to your best. That is enough for now. We will adjust your routine for the next event.”

“You’ve never told Vitya not to aim for gold—”

“Georgi, listen. You are not Victor Nikiforov. And…that is not a bad thing. You do not skate for numbers, or foolish surprises. You skate your emotions. Your love. And that is what will carry you to victory this season. So ignore Katsuki. He is just a distraction, and I do not tolerate distraction in my skaters.”

Georgi nodded, slightly teary-eyed but full of renewed determination. Love was most important, after all. How could he have forgotten? “No distractions! I will skate for Anya! I will win her back and make you proud this season, Coach Yakov!”

“See that you do,” Yakov said, but he was smiling.
MIKE: And group two is now heading out on the ice for warm up. Lots of very serious expressions out there.

TIM: Well, I don’t think anyone was expecting to be competing against the embodiment of Eros, either. There’s no winning against that kind of grace. Or there shouldn’t be.

MIKE: Okay, I know plenty of people—you among them, if I recall—have complained vocally about how heavily jumps are weighted, but the sheer subjectiveness of the performance component means—

TIM: I mean, that’s the value of it. Beauty and artistry aren’t measured with a protractor, Mike. Although, if anyone wants to make a comparison chart of all the skaters’ b—

MIKE: [off air] Techs, reminder, this is Threat Level Timothy. Stay on your toes. [on air] Good thing you’re not judging, eh? You’d award points for being attractive.

TIM: [laughing] Is anyone really immune to that? [pause] And that’s the end of the warm up period for group 2! Okay, so, fans, while we’re waiting for the zamboni, here’s something for you to discuss on the forums, something I was thinking about last night: do you think being inhumanly beautiful should be against ISU rules? Okay, okay, legitimate question, because you know Victor Nikiforov is also working the whole ‘chiselled Grecian deity’ aesthetic and I’m wondering if that’s ever affected the judging. Do more attractive skaters get higher presentation scores? Is there a subconscious bias at work?

MIKE: I really don’t think the bias is subconscious here. [off air] You’d better not still be drunk from last night, Timothy O’Brien.

TIM: [off air] Aw, it was a legitimate question. I actually want to know. And anyway, you drank way more than me.

MIKE: [off air] I still don’t know why they keep letting you commentate these things.

TIM: [off air] I’ve got friends in high places.

MIKE: [off air] No you don’t.

TIM: [off air] I do. My buddy lives in Colorado.

MIKE: [off air]…I’m taking a five. Grab me if someone dies. Or don’t. I don’t care.

TECHNICIAN: Roger that.

“Phichit, why did I do this? Why did I think this was a good idea? He’s going to hate it. He’s going to think I’m an embarrassing infatuated idiot and he’ll find someone who can skate a program without screaming to the entire world about how much they want to marry him—oh my god, I’m Georgi, aren’t I? I’m literally Georgi. I’m never leaving this dressing room. I live here now. I’m a disgrace to Victor and skating and Japan and I’m never—”

“Yuuri! Yuuri. Breathe.”
“I’m—”

“Just breathe with me, okay? In on a count of three. One…two…three. Okay. Now breathe out.”

Yuuri, very slowly, began to breathe, staring at the wide, panicked eyes of his reflection in the full length mirror and listening to Phichit’s soothing voice pouring through the phone speakers.

“You got this, Yuuri, okay? You’re thirty points ahead of old Mickey Crispy Nose—even if you mess up your free, it doesn’t matter. You’re pretty much guaranteed a spot on the podium. And it’s not like it’s the final or anything.”

“I know,” Yuuri said, exhaling shakily. “I’m…I’m not really worried about that? I mean, I am. But not more than normal?”

“Well, that’s good.” Phichit said. “Really good, actually. But if you’re not worried about skating, why are you contemplating a new life as the phantom of the dressing room?”

Yuuri’s gaze flickered anxiously over the figure reflected in the mirror. Traced the clean lines of a black wedding kimono as they faded into the lace and pale silk of a Russian wedding dress, the airy skirt he’d had studded with silver-white stones that he knew lost their edges under stage light and took on the flashing gleam of captive stars, lingered on the forget-me-nots and white roses climbing up the costume’s legs. (True love. Devotion. A promise without words, a mother’s quiet wisdom to the boy who never learned to speak without skates on his feet.)

Fixed on the delicate silver-threaded veil in his hands.

“Victor,” he whispered. “What if he doesn’t…what if it’s too much? What if I’m too much?”

What if after everything, after the gold-gleam miracle of old years and a new future and a skating career that wasn’t over after all—what if Victor finally realized that Katsuki Yuuri was not and never would be good enough for him?

And Yuuri—who loved him so, so much and so, so absolutely that there wasn’t a single cell or soul part left in him that didn’t bend to his gravity, didn’t turn like a plant in the sun to his passing—would have to let him go.

He’d been so sure, before. Absolutely bone-deep certain, as he and Victor choreographed the skate in a whirl of kisses and laughter, as he dragged Phichit out one day when Victor was elsewhere and told him his plans for his costume over pho, as he sat up on late night phone calls and sketched out the details with his mother, who’d met Victor in this timeline over Skype and radio waves and still approved—unreservedly, immediately, and with the kind of fierceness that made him appreciate, yet again, how incredibly perceptive his mother was.

But now, standing here in the harsh dressing room lights with the chatter of the commentary and the rumble of the crowd overhead, Victor banished until the full effect could be seen, he just felt…


“Yuuri Katsuki, you listen to me,” Phichit’s voice cut in, yanking him out of his spiralling thoughts like a bucket of cold water. “I’ve seen the costume, I’ve seen your free skate. And frankly, it’s the most sincere, sugary-sweet declaration of being stupidly in love I’ve ever seen. And yeah, it’s really dramatic and pointed and—let’s be real—it is beyond extra.”

“You aren’t helping, Phichit.”

“Just let me finish, okay? So what I was going to say before I was so rudely interrupted is: but so
are you. You’re extra and opinionated and a total drama queen and really, really, ridiculously in love. And so is Victor. This whole thing is literally your relationship. And if I know Victor he’s going to cry from happiness the minute he sees you. So you better not be standing there convincing yourself that your absolutely head-over-heels for you fiance is going to leave you for making an insanely romantic gesture involving the thing that brought you two together in the first place, because I swear I will fly over there and throw this caramel corn at you til you stop.”

Yuuri, a pragmatist underneath all the anxiety, latched on to the truly important part of that speech. “Are you eating my caramel corn? Phichit, you thief! You know Okaa-san sends me that from Japan!”

“I dedicate my time and phone bill to encouraging you, and that’s what you latch on to?”

“Just…save me a handful,” Yuuri said eventually. “And, uh, Phichit?”

“Yuuri?”

“You’re right. He is going to love it. Thanks.”

There was a lot unsaid in that last little word—there always had been—but Phichit seemed to understand. He always did.

“What is a best friend for? Now go out there and sweep your boy off his feet like Arthur wooing the king in The King and The Skater 2: A Flip of the Heart.”

Yuuri shook his head, reaching for the eyeliner. “I hate that I know what you’re talking about.”

“No, you don’t. The King and The Skater franchise is the pinnacle of cinematic…”

Yuuri hummed a quiet acknowledgement, and set about fixing the damage his panic had done to his make up, Phichit chattering merrily away on speaker beside him and the roar of the crowd a distant thrum under his feet. He wasn’t calm, exactly. His fingers still shook slightly as he outlined his eyes, bursts of sudden nervousness sent his stomach to his feet before leaving on the breath he kept determinedly steady, and he kept catching himself chewing on his bottom lip in a anxious tic he’d never quite rid himself of.

He wasn’t calm. But he was…balanced. Grounded. A tree caught in a sharp wind, branches swaying but roots firmly in the earth. And really, after skating sans foothold in a hurricane for most of his life, that was almost as good as confidence.

SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

TIM: 268.41…and that puts France’s Jules Dumas in first! Let’s see how long he can hold his place on the scoreboard.

MIKE: A shockingly polished skate from the young French spitfire! He’s going to be real competition going into the Cup of China.

TIM: Lots of young talent competing in Beijing this year, it seems. Dumas’ going to have to train hard to outskate Russia’s Yuri Plisetsky, though—the little Ice Tiger is giving us near PURRfect programs.
MIKE: [laughing] Go put a quarter in the pun jar for that catastrophic attempt at humour, Tim. Now, skating next is Russia’s Georgi Popovich, who gave us a very emotional short program yesterday…

TIM: [off air, singing] Puns for the pun god, shills for the shill throne…you best be contributing for that ‘catastrophic’, buddy. [on air] Very emotional. I almost cried watching it myself.

MIKE: [off air] Yeah, from laughing. [on air] Popovich is definitely channelling the intensity of true love this season…he’s said his costume and music choice for this program were inspired by the deep and tormenting love expressed in the works of Edgar Allen Poe…

TIM: [off air] Twas a costume dark and dreary, whilst I pondered, drunk and weary, o’er some volume of mis-weighted scores…

MIKE: [off air] No. [on air] And he’s taking the ice, after what looked to be some heartfelt words with Coach Yakov Feltsman.

TIM: Not words we usually apply to the legendarily bad-tempered coach. Maybe not having to wrangle the notoriously difficult Nikiforov is doing him good.

MIKE: I can’t say I blame him, honestly, if this season is any indication of the kind of insanity Nikiforov usually gets up to. And..yep, okay, here we go.

TIM: Now performing, it’s Russia’s Georgi Popovich! He will be skating to “Annabelle Lee” by Sarah Jarosz. His program was choreographed by Yakov Feltsman.

…

TIM: This is a very morbid piece for a theme of true love.

MIKE: …well, we all experience things differently.

TIM: Not that differently.

…

MIKE: Quad toe loop…nice. Good height.

TIM: A little sloppy on the landing, but overall a very nice jump.

…

MIKE: And here’s the choreographic sequence…wow, you can just feel the passionate intensity radiating from him. He’s really giving it his all.

TIM: To a very alarming degree. It’s…honestly a little off-putting.

MIKE: Ha, well, love’s like that. You’ll understand one day, Tim.

TIM: Quoth the raven…‘No’.

…

TIM: Triple loop, very clean.

MIKE: Popovich has really stepped up his game today. This is the best I’ve seen him skate in a
good while. I don’t know if it’ll be enough for gold, but a podium placement seems very likely.

…

TIM: And Georgi Popovich ends the free program with a combined score of 282.89! He is currently in first place.

MIKE: That’s a new personal best for the Russian skater! Let’s see if Michele Crispino can do just as well as he gets ready to take the ice.

Private message between icetigrr01 and DJOtabeka

icetigrr01: hey, u watching the SC stream?

DJOtabeka: Yeah, Leo hooked us up.

icetigrr01: us?

icetigrr01: don’t tell me ur watching with the canadian asshole too

DJOtabeka: well, we do train together.

DJOtabeka: by the way, he offered to choreograph your exhibition. You know, the one to theme of king JJ?

DJOtabeka: he’s convinced you’re a fan.

icetigrr01: TELL THAT LOSER I’LL FAN HIS FUNERAL PYRE

DJOtabeka: I’m mailing you the posters he signed for you. : )

DJOtabeka: I told him you’d probably scream when you saw them…

DJOtabeka: I just didn’t mention it would be from rage.

icetigrr01: Beka, has anyone ever told u that ur a dick?

DJOtabeka: …I do vaguely recall someone mentioning something of that sort, yes.

icetigrr01: just as long as we’re clear here.

icetigrr01: btw, I sent you something too. it’ll arrive in a few days.

DJOtabeka: should I be concerned?

icetigrr01: ¯\_(ツ)_/¯

DJOtabeka: I’ll take that as a yes.
icetigrr01: only if ur allergic to potatoes.

DJOtabeka: …

icetigrr01: wait shit are u listening to this? that fucking commentator just punned me

icetigrr01: damn right my programs are purrfect

icetigrr01: im the ice tiger of russia

DJOtabeka: right from the meow-th of the legend himself.

icetigrr01: …blocked.

DJOtabeka: I’m just kitten

icetigrr01: NO

DJOtabeka: Ok, ok, a peace offering: so Leo and JJ made the rule that they drink every time that guy says something ridiculous

DJOtabeka: …they’re wasted, Yura.

DJOtabeka: [JJinNarutoHeadbandCrying.jpg]

icetigrr01: I take everything back, ur my hero Beka

…

icetigrr01: holy fuck georgi’s costume is so much worse than I imagined

DJOtabeka: He looks like a depressed bedazzled nun.

icetigrr01: lmao

…

DJOtabeka: Good song, though.

icetigrr01: DJ Otabek trance remix: go

…

icetigrr01: ugh michele crispino

icetigrr01: why is he the way that he is

DJOtabeka: he can’t be that bad

…

DJOtabeka: I was wrong.

…
icetigrr01: he needs a serious intervention

icetigrr01: this can’t be healthy

icetigrr01: normal people don’t throw a hissy fit because their sister has to do an interview during their skate

icetigrr01: poor sara, holy fuck

icetigrr01: shit, fuck the timeline, I’m gonna fix this now

DJOtabeka: ?

icetigrr01: …I’m not a time traveller don’t look at me like that

DJOtabeka: ｊｅｌｙ ｊｅｌｙ ｊｅｌｙ j j

icetigrr01: bite me, altin

…

icetigrr01: That was a surprisingly okay skate

DJOtabeka: I admit, I was expecting a disaster

icetigrr01: Katsudon’s still going to crush him though.

…

DJOtabeka: Leo wants to know when there’s going to be, and I quote, “a battle of the Yuris”

DJOtabeka: JJ is insisting there should be some kind of gladiatorial combat.

DJOtabeka: he’s going on about some American show he used to watch.

DJOtabeka: Apparently it involves jousting.

icetigrr01: Tell de la Iglesia I’m down. I’ll beat Katsudon in any arena.

icetigrr01: as long as he’s not drunk

icetigrr01: and Victor’s not allowed to judge

DJOtabeka: Very well. I will prepare the ceremonial blades.

icetigrr01: I’d laugh, but u probably do have ceremonial blades under ur bed or some shit

DJOtabeka: Closet, actually.

DJOtabeka: The ones under the bed are for practical purposes.

icetigrr01: …this is why we’re friends.
private message between icetigrr01 and so_katsuDONE

icetigrr01: davaï, baka

so_katsuDONE: thanks, asshole : )

Victor was suffering.

This was not, in and of itself, an unusual state of affairs; his husband was both devilishly gorgeous and seraphically oblivious of it (or possibly seraphically gorgeous and devilishly coy about it, Victor had never been quite sure) and by now, suffering was just a daily part of his routine.

But this.

This.

“Yuuri,” he whined, slumped against the dressing room door that so cruelly barred him from the love of his life. “I’m dying. I need CPR. You need to come out here and give me the kiss of life.”

“Vitya,” Yuuri said, voice muffled by the heavy wood. He sounded like he was trying very hard not to laugh. “Patience. I’m nearly done.”

“You’ve been getting ready for nearly fifteen minutes.”

Yuuri did laugh at that. It was a beautiful sound, and Victor pressed his face miserably against the gap between door and frame. His husband had left getting into his mysterious costume til the very last second and it was killing him. “Yuuuuri.”

“Two minutes.”

Victor considered this with narrowed eyes. “Are you sure you don’t need me to zip you up?” he offered, changing tactics.

“Costume doesn’t have zips.”

“Well, I wouldn’t know that, since you still haven’t shown it to me.”

“Just trust me, okay, dorogoy?”

Victor made a quiet keening noise and slumped further down the wall. Russian from Yuuri’s lips was a song straight from the sirens, and he was a weak, weak man to that melody.

“Allright,” he said. “I’ll wait two more minutes. Even though I may actually die. I can already feel my spirit preparing to leave my body.”

“Really? Are you sure it’s not just the hot air trying to escape?”

“I feel like you’re not taking my distress seriously enough, Yuuri.”

“I’m taking it exactly as seriously as it deserves.”
Victor stuck out his tongue, although there was no way his husband would be able to see it. “I bet you’re only being so secretive because you had Yura send you one of my truly avant-garde costumes and you know you can’t pull off the Nikiforov Look like I can.”

“Nope,” Yuuri said, popping the ‘p’ deliberately, voice fading slightly as he moved further away. “Not even close.”

Victor considered this, and then sat up, eyes brightening. “Yuuri, you’re not skating in lingerie, are you?”

It would explain the secrecy, and the decision to leave changing til the very, very last moment. In fact, it explained every—

There was a sputtering noise from inside the dressing room. “What? No! Why would you even think that?”

“Methinks the lady doth protest too much,” Victor singsonged, tapping the door with his foot. “And it would go along so well with Eros!”

“I’m skating to a song about eternal love,” Yuuri said. Victor could almost see him blushing. “Why would I wear *lingerie*?” He gave a sharp exhale, and then trailed off into a string of muttered Japanese that Minako would have been proud of.

“I can still hear you, *zolotse*,” Victor called.

“No you can’t,” Yuuri said immediately.

Victor smiled, humming to himself for a moment before glancing down at his watch. “Oh, look at that,” he said. “Two minutes is up. And you’re skating next, so as your coach I have to officially put my foot down.”

“I know,” came the reply from the dressing room. Then—finally, finally—the door creaked open. Victor scrambled to his feet, dusting off his coat and trying not to look too eager to see what Yuuri had been hiding from him for a month.

“You know, any other coach would have insisted on yo—oh.”

*Oh.*

The symbolism didn’t register at first—nothing really registered, except the endless adoring litany of *Yuuri, Yuuri, Yuuri* and the incoherent, beyond-language concept of *beautiful*. And then the moment broke, Victor’s mind clicked back onto the level of conscious thought and he took into the way the black fabric wrapped around Yuuri’s slim torso like a kimono and the graceful shift from black to flowing white and patterned lace and the *veil holy god the veil* and and and

Victor didn’t realize he was crying until Yuuri’s arms wrapped around him and gentle lips were brushing his tear-damp face, murmuring endearments almost too low to catch.

“I couldn’t think of anything that meant ‘pragma’ to me more than our marriage,” Yuuri said, very quietly. “I…hope that’s okay.”


“I love *you*,” Yuuri said, and kissed him.
“Although,” Victor added, when they finally parted and headed towards the rink on hurried feet, “you do realize that this means now I get to announce our engagement to everyone, right?”

“I think this is going to make our relationship pretty obvious anyway, Vitya.”

Victor just gave a pleased hum, swinging their clasped hands between them and beaming at anyone who passed. It wasn’t exactly professional coach behaviour, but he was much too happy to care.

SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

MIKE: Okay, that was Italy’s Michele Crispino, who’s sitting firmly in second place behind Russia’s Georgi Popovich with a very respectable score of 276.31. Up next is our final competitor, skating last after a dynamite short program yesterday, Japan’s Yuuri Katsuki!

TIM: Will he live up to the standard set by On Love: Eros? My magic eight ball says ‘absolutely!’

MIKE: Well, for those of us who don’t base our estimates on the unlikely prescience of children’s toys, the good folks over at the Sports Centre have Katsuki as the tentative favourite for today. Still, it’ll be a tough program to measure up to. And Katsuki has been particularly elusive all day.

TIM: Yeti Katsuki strikes again.

MIKE: [off air] Really, Tim? It wasn’t even funny the first time. [on air] Well, he’s here now, waiting rinkside while he—while his coach laces his skates for him. That’s…a great deal of trust in Coach Nikiforov there.

TIM: Hell, I wouldn’t even let Terry touch my skates before a competition. Probably punch him if he tried, ha.

MIKE: Terry O’Brien is Tim’s much nicer twin brother, for those out there wondering.

TIM: Yup. Best buds since before birth. Still wouldn’t trust him with my skates.

MIKE: Well, it’s pretty clear that Nikiforov and Katsuki have established a much stronger rapport than your average coach-skater team.

TIM: [off air] [snickering] Yeah, they ‘established a rapport’ all right. After that skate yesterday, I bet they established a rapport all ni—

MIKE: [off air] Tim.

TIM: [off air] C’mon, you saw the interview—

MIKE: [off air] It’s really none of our business what they do off camera.

TECHNICIAN: Off camera my ass. Dude basically skated ‘come get it Nikiforov’ on international television.
MIKE: [off air] I don’t get paid enough for this. [on air] At any rate, that’s a huge show of trust from a skater to his coach. And Katsuki’s out on the rink now, exchanging what look like very emotional words with Coach Nikiforov over the barrier.

TIM: And wow, just—that’s a beautiful costume. A completely different mood from yesterday, but...[sighs loudly]

MIKE: You know, it really is quite stunning. Katsuki clearly has no hang ups about incorporating more traditionally feminine elements into his costume choices, and I have to say, he looks damn good.

TIM: Damn good is an understatement, Mike. [off air] ...uh, so, is anyone going to say it?

MIKE: [off air] What, that that is clearly a veil in his hair and that outfit is clearly designed to scream ‘wedding’ at anyone who looks at it?

TIM: [off air] Yeah.

MIKE: [off air] Hell no. I’m not going near that clusterfuck of implication with a ten foot pole. [on air] Okay, Katsuki’s taking the ice...

TIM: The anticipation is killing me.

MIKE: And here’s Japan’s Yuuri Katsuki, skating to ‘On Love: Pragma’! His routine was co-choreographed by himself and Victor Nikiforov.

TIM: Pragma, that’s enduring love, right?

MIKE: I think so, yes.

TIM: [sighs deeply]

Yuuri, though it had taken him a long time realise it, had lived his entire life as the glowing core of a whole blooming galaxy of every form of love. Hiroko, Toshiya, Mari, Vicchan, Yuuko, Takeshi, Phichit, Yura, Mila, Makka—a thousand stars in orbit and orbited themselves, life and laughter flowing between like gravity waves in a void full of stardust. In another world, a younger Yuuri had skated his heart and his gratitude for all of them out to ‘Yuri On Ice’, and odds were he’d do it again this time around, come winter in a sun-drenched city by the Mediterranean sea. But this season, this time, after waking up five years in the past and realizing how desperately much of that love he’d given and gotten from the man he’d thought for a terrible moment that he’d lost—well.

"Victor is the first person I have ever wanted to hold on to," he’d told the world, the first time around, falling hard and fast and blithely oblivious to it. It was true then. It was truer now.

Every routine he’d ever skated was a promise to a whole world of people—to his family, to his friends, to his fans, to make them proud, to keep fighting, to be better, always better—but this?

This was just for Victor. A promise from the Yuuri who’d stood beside him at the altar and every day since.

I do. Every time.
SKATE CANADA OFFICIAL COMMENTARY TRANSCRIPT (UNEDITED STUDIO COPY, DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)

TIM: Wow…

MIKE: That was…an extraordinary performance. Truly extraordinary. Um. I think I’m supposed to be saying something here, but I’m not sure how to do that justice.

TIM: [quietly] He just…he loves him so much…and I…

MIKE: [off air] It’s okay, buddy. It’s okay.

You could hear a pin drop as Yuuri held his ending pose, on one knee with arms outstretched to Victor, who gazed back with tears dripping down his face, hands pressed to his mouth.

Then the moment broke like a wave on the shoreline, the audience bursting into screaming applause and Yuuri and Victor, heedless, racing towards each other along the rink wall, binary stars collapsing into their shared gravity and then—

Victor jumped, and Yuuri caught. Slid backwards under the momentum of impact, and then steadied, skates firmly on the ice and legs braced to hold them both up, their arms tight around each other and mouths pressed together like two drowning men who’d finally found air.

“I guess I didn’t surprise you this time, ne?” Victor said with a watery laugh, when they finally, finally parted.

“Uh, well, you kind of did,” Yuuri said, cheeks softly pink. “I was actually about to tackle kiss you. I—I didn’t think you’d jump first. Not after what you did to your hand last time.”

“But you caught me!” Victor said, kissing his nose. “My hero.”

“Always,” Yuuri said, and then shifted his grip slightly. “Uh…I love you, Viten’ka, very much, but can we take this off the ice? Your hero’s arms are getting tired.”

Victor sighed. “I guess we do have to go see exactly how dramatically you just broke my shiny new world record. And I was just getting used to it, too.”

“Then you’d better level up those programs, Vitya,” Yuuri said, skating very carefully to the rink entrance. “I expect a challenge at the final.”

“Oh, you’re on, lubov moya,” Victor said, giving him that brilliant heart-shaped grin. “I’ll skate your record into the dirt, and then everyone will know that I love you the most.”

“I love you the most,” Yuuri said instinctively.

“Mmmm…nope, I love you more.”

Yuuri narrowed his eyes at his husband. “I love you times infinity.”
“I love you times infinity plus one.”

“That’s not a real amount.”

“Naturally. My love for you is unreal.”

“I’ll drop you.”

“No, you won’t.”

“Don’t challenge me, Vitya.”

[video]

**Yuuri Katsuki’s Record-Breaking Inaugural Performance Of ‘On Love: Pragma’ ft. THE KISS™**

731, 862 views

**hey-mickey-u-so-fine**

when ur otp kiss on live tv

now accepting bets on the wedding date

**azurath metrion zinthos**

literally all of y’all screaming about the kiss and no one mentions that Katsuki landed a perfect quad flip at 3:51.

that’s Nikiforov’s signature move, y’all. Ain’t no one else landed that shit. anyone can kiss a dude. our boy katuski goes above and beyond like a fucking champion.

That’s true love, there. All y’all saying Katsuki’s not good enough for Nikiforov—i don’t see any of y’all landing a fucking 3.0 GOE 4f in an international competition for him.

but that’s none of my business.

**hotdog princess**

omg, so katsuki won skate canada. so what? its not like there was much competition. hes going to crash and burn the minute he hits the big leagues and Victor will drop him like an unfashionable tie when he does. good ridance. Victor deserves better.

**Matrim MFing Cauthon**
I’m literally crying. Look at our sweet cinnamon son go. That costume. That choreographic sequence. That layback Ina Bauer. The Flip. The entire fucking thing. I am genuinely *upset* about how amazing he is. He absolutely deserved that world record and I will fight anyone who says otherwise.

Seriously, the commentators were *literally speechless* through the whole thing, and if you think it’s easy to shut up Tim ‘smartass’ O’Brien and Mike ‘done with this shit’ Letherman, then you need to go back to school and learn some basic reasoning skills.

TRENDING BUZZFEED ARTICLES: TOPIC: FIGURE SKATING

**Fifteen Reaction GIFS That Perfectly Sum Up Our Feelings About Skate Canada**
[Flailing Kermit Meme]

**Why Yuuri Katsuki’s ‘Pragma’ Wedding Dress Costume was Even More Meaningful Than You Thought**
A costume designer from the Metropolitan Opera talks Orthodox weddings, Kimonos, and Japanese flower language.

**Georgi Popovich’s Most Incredibly 90s Routines**
Goth ain’t got nothing on Georgi.

**Top Ten GIFS of Victor Nikiforov Crying Like a Renaissance Painting at His Boyfriend’s Romantic Free Skate**
Cry too because you’ll never have a love this pure or look this good doing it.

**Nine Times We Were All Gay as Hell for Mila Babicheva**
Make way for the queen, boys.

Chapter End Notes

So, uh...cavity inducing fluff. Don't say you weren't warned.

Next time: Yurio gets tired of Victuuri being obnoxiously in love and takes the spotlight for himself.

I have a tumblr now. Come find me at punsfortheungod and join me in dark rituals for our lord and saviour Yuuri Katsuki! I also did some art for this fic while fighting writer's block: One of Phichit's Instagram posts from the Party and a quick concept sketch for Yuuri's Pragma costume. Enjoy! Or don't. It's up to you.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

I rise from the abyss to lay this chapter before you before returning to my stygian abode. The sound of a pen scratching is heard.

In all seriousness, I love this story and I never actually meant to leave it this long. So thank you for your patience. And thank you even more for all the lovely comments that have given me moments of light these past months.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Yuri, although he affected a deliberately infuriating facade of teenage apathy and dismissive assurance when the subject was raised, was looking forward to the Cup of China with every prickly, on-the-cusp of growth bone in his body. And, despite every appearance and precedent, it wasn’t even the thrill and love of competition that galvanized his skates, not fully (because Yuri, gifted and dedicated and more like his mentor than he’d ever like to admit, still thrived on the display of his art), it was, just—

Look. Yuri knew he’d been an absolute shit as a kid. He’d been brash and rude and a degree of aggressive that bordered on genuine cruelty, and even if in the five years that he’d lost he hadn’t entirely grown out of it, he’d at the very least grown aware of it. He’d learned—slowly, haltingly, in late night video chats and the silent aftermath of things he’d finally realized couldn’t be taken back—that being the best was worthless if that was all you were.

All these character developments and life lessons and hard won maturity were all well and good, naturally, congratulations, kudos and canapes all around, but it did leave him with an incredibly frustrating problem:

No one in St. Petersburg was actually aware of any of this. And thus, Yuri found himself playing the old familiar part of both prodigy and pariah and…it was not quite as much fun as he remembered. Not even the admiring gasps as he flashed through his programs in a blaze of blond hair and lightning could dull the nagging sense of something missing.

(“Agape,” his inner Victor supplied, heart shaped grin out in full force.)

(Yuri snarled and launched himself into a triple flip.)

He almost wished he’d agreed to the couple’s insistence that he come to Detroit to train with them. Almost—because Yuri knew exactly how much rebellion Russia was willing to suffer for the sake of a gold medal, and here, now—well, they would never stand idly by while both its Living
Legend and his designated successor fled its shores for the soft smiles and flashing effortless grace of a perennially underscored Japanese skater. Victor, with four World Championships already, could get away with it (and would have gone even if he couldn’t). Yuri, as yet untested...well, it was best for everyone that he stay.

Even if Mila had taken to calling him “Yuri the Second” and endlessly teasing him about texting Katsudon on breaks.

(It was actually Beka, because for all he liked and missed Katsudon he could be frustrating as shit at times and Beka—well, Beka was like cool flowing water on Yuri’s constantly catching temper and fucking funny to boot, and even with those five years gone and what must have seemed like a call out of nowhere (“Hi, Otabek Altin? This is Yuri Plisetsky. Do you want to be friends or not?”) they’d clicked and fallen into the same immediate close confidence that they had the first time around. Yuri genuinely liked Beka. And Beka, for reasons he’d never quite understood, genuinely liked Yuri.

(Beka had never seemed to have trouble deciphering Yuri’s reasons for anything. Beka, Yuri suspected, could read him like a book, subtext and allegory and badly-indexed footnotes and all. It had never bothered him as much as he’d always imagined it would. Some things were easier when you didn’t have to speak to be understood.)

But, either way, Mila absolutely did not need to know any of that. He’d heard enough of her commentary the first time around.)

He pulled a face and spun into a sharp-edged step sequence from one of Katsudon’s old programs, rolling his eyes at Georgi’s long-suffering sigh as he did so. At least Mila supported him under all the teasing. And had actually fucking listened to him when he told her to dump her cheating boyfriend and finally act on her planet-sized crush on Sara Crispino.

He was pretty proud of that, actually.

Yakov, checking his watch, gave a loud bellow of “Yura!” and Yuri skated slowly over, pale fringe falling over his eyes. The Cup of China—and his reunion with Beka—couldn’t come soon enough.

Private message between icetigrr01 and DJOtabeka

icetigrr01: hey, when are u landing in china?

DJOtabeka: about 1300 on Saturday. You?

icetigrr01: day earlier. Yakov’s gone full ahab

icetigrr01: ARRRR WE MUST HARPOON THE GOLDEN WHALE YURATCHKA

icetigrr01: I think he might actually have a stroke if I don’t beat at least one of the idiot couple in the final

icetigrr01: this ice rink is saltier than the atlantic

icetigrr01: but Victor’s tears when he loses to me are gonna be even saltier

DJOtabeka: I hate to crush your dreams, but I’ve been informed by very credible sources that
Victor Nikiforov only cries the purest Elysian spring water and impossibly expensive champagne.

icetigrr01: I mean, I guess that explains Katsudon’s post skate interviews

DJOtabeka: haha

DJOtabeka: also it’s really kinda heartwarming that you actually read the books your dads rant about on twitter

icetigrr01: pssh no I netflixed that shit

icetigrr01: AND THEY AREN’T MY FUCKING PARENTS

icetigrr01: WHY DOES EVERYONE THINK THAT

DJOtabeka: probably because they keep sending you care packages and tagging you in embarrassing memes

DJOtabeka: Victor even knitted you a scarf

icetigrr01: Victor stress knits it proves nothing

DJOtabeka: and a matching one for your cat

DJOtabeka: also the infamous gif from Skate America of you running over to Katsuki with a handful of bobby pins and insisting he fix your hair

icetigrr01: what like I was going to ask Yakov to do it

icetigrr01: yakov doesn’t have hair

DJOtabeka: I mean, let’s not be uncharitable. He has a hair

icetigrr01: lol I’ll give you that

DJOtabeka: you know I’m right, though.

icetigrr01: go suck a moby dick, beka

DJOtabeka: do your parents know you’re abusing the literary canon like this?

icetigrr01: pssh they invented it

icetigrr01: wait no

:DJOtabeka: BUSTED

icetigrr01: ok no let’s be clear here: they’re my dorky annoying older brothers who think they’re my parents

icetigrr01: my true father is darkness

DJOtabeka: …

icetigrr01: you heard me
DJOtabeka ok, you know I have to add that to your wikipedia page, don’t you?

icetigrr01: …uh oh

DJOtabeka: “Yuri Nikolayovitch Plisetsky, 15, god-tier Russian figure skater, cat enthusiast… and self confessed illegitimate child of Georgi Popovitch and his makeup bag.”

icetigrr01: …

icetigrr01: beka

icetigrr01: I like you so I’m warning you

icetigrr01: as soon as you touch down in beijing I’m going to kick your magnificent velour-pantsed ass all the way to fucking siberia

DJOtabeka *thumbs up emoji*

The last thing Yuri expected when they finally made it through the gauntlet of shrieking and sobbing Angels outside the official hotel in Beijing (an endeavour dotted with the occasional microphone shoved in his face and a frantic litany of ‘are Katsuki and Nikiforov really engaged?’ ‘Are you going to take back the free skate world record from Katsuki?’ ‘Would you say he’s your rival?’ ‘Do you think there’s room for two Yuris in the figure skating scene?’ ‘Any comment on Victor’s absence from Russia this season?’ ‘But are they actually engaged?’) and sat tiredly on his bags as Yakov checked them in was to be hit with the full blinding power of a concentrated sunbeam, and yet, here he was.

“Selfie!” Phichit Chulanont chirped, whipping his phone out and snapping a photo before he could think to flip off the camera. That, he suspected darkly, was sort of the point, so he flipped off Phichit instead.

“Yuri Plisetsky gave me the finger in person,” Phichit said, one hand pressed to his chest, the other tucked suspiciously behind his back. “Hashtag blessed.”

Yuri snorted. “Who the fuck says ‘hashtag’ in real life?”

“Well, you just did, so that makes about…two of us,” Phichit said, utterly unfazed. “It’s cool, Mini-Yuuri, I’m a trendsetter.”

He pronounced the name with the long ‘u’, which was almost as annoying as the ‘mini’ which preceded it.

“Tcha,” Yuri said, pulling his hood up with a sharp movement and glowering. “Give it two years and I’ll have a foot on Katsudon, and two feet on you, Peach-Eat. The fuck are you bothering me for, anyway? Did Victor put you up to this?”

“Nope,” Phichit said, popping the plosive with a sly grin that bypassed the alarm bells in Yuri’s mind and went straight for the emergency exit. “Yuuri did. He wanted to make sure your present was properly delivered.”

Yuri narrowed his eyes. The last care package he’d received from the couple—stuffed with tea,
peanut butter, Mama Katsuki’s homemade onsen soap, some utterly horrifying American soda comprised mostly of corn syrup and the glistening neon remnants of aspirated nightmares, athletic tape, pop tarts, a drawing of a very unimpressed Potya in a crinoline, and new ballet shoes (and he hadn’t asked and they hadn’t either, but one of them must have noticed the fraying soles and safety pinned elastic caught in flashes on his Insta feed, the money from his sponsors sent home to Moscow to his dedushka with admonitions not to over exert himself and listen to his doctor and eat healthy, and did he see the video he posted of his quad loop and of course he’d show him how to use ‘the Twittergram’ and he’d send him the silver medal from Skate America and maybe if his back was up to it he could come to Sochi for the final? He’d take care of everything. He just had to come. Please.)—had been perfectly innocent and thoughtful. Much too innocent, in Yuri’s opinion. It reeked of Katsudon saving up his mischief for a more opportune moment.

That moment had apparently arrived, because before he could react Phichit had whipped something soft and antlered from behind his back and jammed it on Yuri’s head.

“Say ‘It’s JJ Style!’” Phichit beamed, snapping photos with inhuman speed and precision.

Yuri, with a growing horrified certainty, snatched the offending article off his head with a high-pitched shriek, sending Leo de la Iglesia right back into the elevator from which he was about to emerge, the other Russian skaters into peals of laughter, and occasioning a purely automatic scolding from Yakov.

“Yeah, so Yuuri wasn’t kidding about the moose hat,” Phichit said, with an undignified giggle-snort, as Yuri glared at the knitted cap on the floor. The absolute shithead had even ironed a bright purple ‘JJ’ patch on the ear flaps. It was…actually pretty funny, but he certainly wasn’t telling him that. “I’m so proud of him. My tiny marshmallow son has grown into a magnificent Peep, sugary and delicious on the outside, and satan’s actual asshole on the inside.”

“Tell Katsudon I’m going to skate him into cutlets when I see him,” Yuri snarled.

“Yessss! Yuri Battle!” Phichit said, sounding utterly thrilled. “It is so on.”

phichit+chu

[Image: Yuri Plisetsky sitting on his luggage in the lobby of a hotel, a knitted moose hat on his head, an expression of horrified rage on his face. Phichit Chulanont’s face frames the corner of the shot, hand held dramatically over his mouth, eyes comically wide.]

77k likes
Operation Antlers is a success!
#yuri-plisetsky #jjleroy!15 #katsudon-y #teamdetroit #iriskedmylifeforubuddy #youoweme #battleoftheyuris #itsjjstyle #ocanada #plisetskyexhibitionskate #didanyoneeverexplainthistojj #whoopssorryleroy

yuri+angels OMG YURATCHKA YOUR SO CUTE!!!!11!!!

Jjleroy!15 I think I’m a little out of the loop here? Awesome hat, though. Totally JJ Style.

phichit+chu @Jjleroy!15 the tiny russian Yuri is salty that your quad lutz is better than his and
extra salty that he has to do his exhibition to your theme song b/c his world record got Nikiforoved and not-quite-as-tiny Japanese Yuuri is a madman who likes to poke tigers

**Jleryoy!15** I’d be more than happy to give little Yuri a few tips on landing that lutz more consistently!

Good sportsmanship is the real JJ Style!

**yuri-plisetsky** I DON’T NEED YOUR FUCKING HELP JUSTIN JEIBER

**jayjaybird** All hail His Majesty King JJ, a bacon of grace and hope in these dark times

*edit: I MEANT WHAT I SAID*

**yuriplisetskysfuturewife** Yuras lutz is better than JJS any day!!!! I don’t see him breaking any world records!

**MilaBabe** I’m officially calling it: Yuuri Katsuki is the greatest thing that’s ever happened to team russia

*ever*

I’m sorry, Vitya, but your olympic medals just can’t compete

**v-nikiforov** @MilaBabe I’m sorry, i think you meant Yuuri Katsuki is the greatest thing that’s ever happened, period.

**katsudon-y** Wrong. No. Victor Nikiforov is the greatest thing that has ever happened and I will personally fight anyone who says otherwise.

**v-nikiforov** pistols at dawn it is, **lyubov moya** <3 <3 <3 ten steps and shoot for the heart.

**katsudon-y** there’s no point aiming for my heart, v-nikiforov because you’ve already stolen it. <3

**phichit-chu** really? right in front of my insta?

**rainbow-road** can victor and yuuri stop being adorable for like, five seconds? I have to stop screaming at some point and they’re making it really difficult.

**elayne_trakand** tfw ur destined rival pranks you from two continents away

**katsudon-y** And thanks, Phichit!

**yuri-plisetsky** katsudon you better start running right now because as soon as I win gold here I’m making tonkatsu out of your loser ass

Yakov was tired. The day had stretched out longer than it’s component hours, spent subjected to what Aeroflot euphemistically described as ‘customer service’, the endless squabbling of the other skaters travelling with them from Russia (surely a lost sweater didn’t require so much discussion!), weather, flight delays, and Yura’s impatient fidgeting and constant texting. (And who was he talking to so much, anyway? It couldn’t be Vitya or the Japanese Yuri, because it was past...
midnight where they were and he was painfully aware of Vitya’s habit of starting his training at an ungodly hour of the morning. And, as far as Yakov was aware, there wasn’t anyone else that Yura ever felt the need to reply to. It was starting to worry him, honestly. After all, the Internet was how the Japanese Yuri had gotten his succubus hands on Vitya.)

(Gotten his succubus hands on Vitya, just to put him piece by piece back together from the empty places Yakov had never been able to reach and go on to skate him a love song like a hallelujah. And Yakov had been left to watch Vitya throw himself without a heartbeat’s hesitation into the boy’s arms, crying like he hadn’t in fifteen years, and count all the ways he had failed him.)

(Yakov tried very hard not to think about the Other Yuri.)

And if none of this was enough, Cialdini’s other student (because he was absolutely acknowledging Vitya and his boyfriends absolute farce of a coaching arrangement), the Chulanont boy, had done something to set off Yura’s temper—something ridiculous about a hat and the arrogant Canadian skater the teen had a particular loathing for—and now he was stalking about the hotel room, swearing at his phone and grumbling about ‘pork cutlets’ and being ‘memed’, whatever that meant.

Figure skaters were mad, every one of them.

“Yura, we must discuss your programs,” he said, partly because it was true, mostly because the boy’s muttering was getting on his nerves.

Yura glanced up, expression outwardly annoyed but a gleam of amusement on the curve of his lips, an almost fond exasperation just barely visible in his eyes.

Somewhere in these past few months, Yakov thought, Yura’s expressions had gotten far too knowing.

“My programs are strong,” he said. “I can win with them, easily.”

“Just because Vitya or the Japanese Yuri are not here does not mean you can slack off!” Yakov snapped. “The Leroy boy’s base scores are high—very high! And Cialdini’s student has great presence—better than you. He has a natural flair. The audience does not care that he has no quads—he has the charisma and the footwork to max out his performance components. An area in which, I will say, that you are lacking.”

“I know,” Yura said.

“Strong jumps and spins will do you no good when—” he paused mid lecture, his student’s response finally registering. It was…not what he had expected. “You know? You agree that it must be fixed?” he eyed Yura with deep suspicion. “This is one of your nonsensical Internet jokes, da? Unacceptable. Competition begins in two days, and if you fail now Russia will be—I will be shamed forever. It—”

“I’m not joking, Coach,” Yura snapped. “I don’t joke about figure skating. I agree with you. My performance components are weak. And I have been studying the skaters who aren’t so I can make them stronger and beat everyone fair and square.”

Yakov contemplated this for a minute. “That is…not bad. Perhaps we will see improvement for this competition. But it won’t be enough at the final.”

He didn’t question for a second that Yura would be in the Finals this year. It had seemed like a bizarre dream, at first, his apathetic young protege rising out of the blue in Vitya’s wake and insisting he could compete in Seniors in his place, but…
Well, he’d proved himself enough in Skate America. Yakov, a fine judge of skaters after so many years in the world, felt no compunction in looking forward to two new medals for Russia in the Grand Prix. One from Vitya, lovesick, traitorous genius that he was, and one from Russia’s new sweetheart and next legend, Yuri Plisetsky.

Yura was looking at him again with those too-knowing eyes, one finger pressed to his mouth in a way starkly reminiscent of another young man who had once stood in this same place, just on the cusp of greatness and ready to throw his entire being into meat grinder to achieve it. “I wondered…” he said, very slowly. “Do you think Madame Lilia would be willing to accept a new student?”

Yes, figure skaters were all utterly mad.

Yakov had also been a figure skater, though, and one likewise dedicated and desperate, so he merely sighed and resigned himself to a season of trading politely vicious barbs with his ex wife.

“I will speak to her,” he said. “You are young still, moldable. And the Katsuki boy trained under a dancer. Yes, I will speak to her.”

“I won’t let you down, Coach,” Yura said. For a moment, he looked as though he wanted to say something more, but drew back after a second, green eyes flashing fire behind his bangs.

“I know,” Yakov said. “I give Georgi leeway to fail, because he cannot win otherwise. But I expect gold from you this week, Yura. Nothing less.”

“Da,” Yura said. “Gold.”
As strange as it was, Otabek Altin had never forgotten Yuri Plisetsky, not once in the long hard years of training as he flung his defiantly solid body into unforgiving air and ice, again and again, learning resilience from every thud and fall and the value of it in the rising. He had no reason he could articulate; there had been no childhood friendship to rekindle from their brief meeting, no words between them at all, in fact, nothing—except flashing green soldier’s eyes in a ballet dancer’s form. And he’d watched from across screens and sidelines and the undifferentiated middle of the competition pack as those green eyes had shot past him like a meteor heading for the galaxy’s heart, screaming and bright and never losing a shred of their fire. And Otabek had followed, slow and calm and utterly inexorable, forging his own steady orbit through the stardust, his own way, his own war. No, he hadn’t forgotten Yuri Plisetsky.

Yuri Plisetsky had forgotten him, though, if there was anything ever there to forget. Not that he minded, really. He had his own way of doing things. Mars would meet the meteor eventually. After all, under the fire and the dust, they were both made of iron.

That eventually had come sooner than he expected, though, in a snide comment from yuri-plisetsky on one of the mixes he’d posted from his DJing account that had made him duck out of the room so no one would see him laughing (he had a reputation to maintain, after all), and then suddenly Yuri Plisetsky was following him on all of his few SNS platforms and sending him pictures of his cat and retweeting his mixes with numerous thumbs up emojis and finally one day he answered his phone to be met with a growling Russian voice demanding that they be friends.

Obviously Otabek had agreed. He appreciated the directness. It was how he’d planned to address the subject himself, should the opportunity ever arise. So he’d agreed, not without worry but with every bit of the headfirst all-you-got decisiveness that had set him here in the first place, and what he’d found was that while he’d liked and admired the idea of Yuri Plisetsky, he liked the reality of Yura even better. Real life Yuri wore leopard print like it was the 80s and had a mouth like a trashed punk rocker and spoiled his cat outrageously and was grumpy and aggressive and funny and driven, and Otabek quickly found him near the top of his list of favourite people. The fact that they hadn’t actually seen each other in person since childhood hadn’t seemed to matter at all.

Still, as the Cup of China approached, Otabek felt some uncharacteristic twinges of nerves—not for the skating, necessarily; he was more confident in his programs than he had ever been, thanks in part to Yura’s surprisingly astute advice on his spins—but a kind of quiet anxiety that in person, the brilliantly explosive meteor would want nothing to do with stoic, silent Otabek.

The eager messages that popped up in increasingly short intervals demanding to know how soon he’d be at the hotel and griping about Coach Feltsman’s apparent lack of roommate etiquette definitely eased his fears, though.

“I really feel like something weird is going on this season,” JJ said suddenly, as they sat in a taxi jack-knifing through the Beijing traffic with no regard for life or limb. “Like, when did Katsuki have time to learn three new quads? He was eating ice on doubles last year.”

A plaintive yakov’s eating pickled garlic out of a fucking jar save meeeeee pinged up on his phone screen. Otabek tried very hard not to smile.

I’m sharing a taxi with three Leroy’s. he sent back. Wanna trade?

Nathalie and Alain Leroy were exchanging dark looks. “Don’t worry about it, dear,” Nathalie said, after a moment. “It’s all just one of Nikiforov’s ridiculous publicity stunts. He knows he can’t
keep winning and he’s trying to keep up his popularity by propping up a second rate skater. They’re coasting on the scandal they’re causing. But people turn on that kind of behaviour like that.” She slapped her leg. Her husband jumped slightly. Otabek’s own coach, passed out against the window, merely snored loudly and continued sleeping. “Good grace and style—like you have, dear—have staying power.”

The taxi made another abrupt turn just as Yura’s response of fuck no popped up on his screen. An ellipse appeared for a moment before he was gifted with the further fruits of his friend’s acerbic wit.

**serious question tho: does that many giant waving dicks in one place legally count as an orgy?**

Otabek tried very, very hard not to smile.

“Come on, Mom. Katsuki’s never been second-rate,” JJ was saying. “Remember his Lohengrin program the other year? If I’d’ve been in Seniors I would have felt pretty good winning against it.”

Nathalie sniffed. “Well, at least you’ve never had to resort to skating ‘sexy’ programs to get medals.”

The air quotes were practically audible.

“I don’t think it was medals he was after,” Otabek murmured. “Unless you count Nikiforov’s as marital property.”

“Pardon?” Nathalie said. “I didn’t quite catch that.”

Otabek gave her a studiously blank look. “Just thinking through my programs, Mrs. Leroy.”

She eyed him for a moment and then, clearly remembering that he was not a Leroy, and for that grave sin entirely unworthy of her attention, utterly dismissed him from her mind.

“The little Russian Yuri really has some crazy devoted fans for a newbie, eh?” JJ was saying, still scrolling through his feed.

“Oh, don’t worry about them, dear,” Nathalie Leroy said, squinting across the taxi at his screen. “No class at all. You don’t want that kind of girl cheering you on.”

“I reckon Isabella would kick ‘em out before they had a chance to,” JJ’s father said, grabbing the door handle as the driver took a particularly sharp turn. “Oof! Nice girl, that.”

“Bella’s great,” JJ said, looking fond. Then he looked down at his own phone and his expression turned puzzled. “I still don’t really understand what the whole thing about the moose hat was, though.”

Otabek, the source of a shocking number of the ‘abominable tigermoose’ memes that had made the rounds since Phichit’s photo had gone viral, merely gazed stonily at the divider and stored Nathalie Leroy’s expression of affronted confusion away for a rainy day.

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Private message between icetigrr01 and DJOtabeka
JJ had never been entirely sure about Otabek Altin. Sure, they trained at the same rink, traded nods in passing, and on a few memorable occasions Otabek, expressionless and aloof as ever, had acted as the designated sober friend for he, Bella, and Leo. Well, he said ‘friend’. JJ, had he thought about if for more than a moment, would have said that Otabek didn’t actually have any. After all, he’d never so much as cracked a smile at JJ, even though they’d been skating on the same ice for years. Not even when he told him the joke about the purple ping pong balls, and that always got at least a groan.

No, Otabek Altin was not the sort to let anyone closer than the edge of his skates. Which was why JJ was absolutely, utterly gobsmacked when, checking in at the front desk of the hotel in Beijing, the quiet of the lobby was disturbed by someone hollering “Beka!” at the top of their lungs, and he was shoved aside by a tiny blond blur who latched onto Otabek like a cat on a velcro teddy bear.

“Yura!” Otabek replied, calm, unsurprised, and smiling. “It’s been a while.”

“Next time you want to be friends with your ballet classmate just say so, da?” terrifying human tiger Yuri Plisetsky growled, face buried in Otabek’s sweater, not a single claw or dripping fang in sight.

JJ, recovering his balance, slowly became aware of a growing wall of noise behind him, a rising high-pitched squeal that shot past the upper limits of the human eardrum and stabilized somewhere around the frequency of a dog whistle.

“Oh, crap,” Yuri Plisetsky said, head snapping up like a gazelle hearing the lioness approach. “Angels.”

“No worries,” Otabek said, lifting his sunglasses and measuring the distance from the check in counter to the door. “I called in a favour from a local friend before I got here.”

Plisetsky looked almost impressed. “Da? Really?”

“Yeah,” Otabek said, handing his suitcase and skate bag to his largely uninterested coach. From outside, a low rumble and the screech of tires was faintly audible through the general cacophony. “He’s letting me borrow his motorbike. He’s dropping it off right now.”

“Awesome,” Yuri Plisetsky said, and grinned like catching brush fire.

“Really,” JJ’s mother said, when the two delinquents had run off one step ahead of a hive of squealing fangirls. “A motorbike? Who does that boy think he is, the Terminator?”

“Well, he’s got the robot part down pat, at least,” his father said jovially. “Alright, kiddo. We’ll put this stuff in the room and then take a gander at the rink. You’ve got a competition to win.”
Ice Tiger Appreciation Board

Now Livestreaming: Cup of China!!!!

Season Wins:
2nd place Skate America (but he broke VN’s record!!!!)

[#ALTINGATE] [SPECULATION] [UPDATES] I did some digging, and…

[#ALTINGATE] [TWITTER] Yura just tweeted “Beka should consider a second career as a stunt driver #awesome #beijing #itsmadmaxouther #andimlovingit”!

[#ALTINGATE] [SPECULATION] SABOTAGE????????!

[PHOTOS] [UPDATE] [#ALTINGATE] he called him Yura he had a helmet all ready for him this was planned

[BREAKING NEWS] [IMPORTANT] [DRAMA] OUR YURA WAS SEEN BY OUR ANGELS ON LOCATION AT THE OFFICIAL HOTEL RIDING OFF ON A MOTORCYCLE WITH KAZAKSTAN’S OTABEK ALTIN

[IMPORTANT] [CUTE PHOTOS] [SCREAMING] i got a pic of yura and altin smiling at each other asdfadsjflksadjf

[IMPORTANT] [CUTE PHOTOS] [AAAAAH] [BREAKING] YURA TACKLE HUGGED OTABEK ALTIN!!!! HE SMILED! HOW DO THEY KNOW EACH OTHER WHAT IS GOING ON?!!!!?

[CUTE PHOTOS] [DRAMA] [#TIGERMOOSEGATE] why Yura hates JJ Leroy and why you should too

[LOCATION UPDATE] Yura has arrived at the official hotel!!! T-3 days to competition

[CUTE PHOTOS] [#PUMATIGERSCORPION] Yura Posted a New Photo of Potya

v-nikiforov

[Image: Victor and Yuuri in matching pink and blue dinosaur pyjama pants, cuddled together on their bed in front of a laptop decorated with Hatsetsu Ice Castle stickers. Makkachin, photogenic as ever, is flopped across their legs. Phichit’s three hamsters are fast asleep on back. Victor and Yuuri are beaming and holding up signs reading “Давай, Yura!” and “Phichit!”]

54k likes
Livestreaming the China Cup Short Program! Good luck to all the competitors!
#katsudon-y #loveofmylife #makka #skatechina #figureskating #shortprogram #yuri-plisetsky #phichit-chu #weloveyouyura #tellotabekhi #dontforgeturhairties #dontlookatmelikethatyoungman #thisisthevoiceofexperiencespeaking #haveuvevertriedquadflipwithurflyingeverywhere #protip:dont #uwillandonyourass #itwillhurt
“So, do you think Yura’s going to manage to break your records?” Victor said, tugging the fleece blanket tighter around both of them and scratching Makka’s ears apologetically when the movement disturbed her.

“He’d better,” Yuuri said, snuggling down in his expertly crafted husband-and-blanket cocoon so that only his eyes were visible, two endlessly deep wells of red-gold warmth. “I didn’t go to all the trouble of riling him up for nothing. I want the satisfaction of beating his best when I win at the Final.”

Victor stared at him. “That’s diabolical, Yuuri.”

“I’m like a figure skating, anxiety-ridden Professor Moriarty, Vitya, you knew this when you married me,” Yuuri said, looking up at him from under his eyelashes with an expression of such perfect innocence that its very existence should be deemed grounds for an arrest. “Now pass the popcorn. Evil masterminding burns a lot of calories.”
Stay tuned for the Cup of China!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!