

something so precious

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something so precious

by [stammiviktor](#)

Summary

The world does not always see what Yuuri sees.

Notes

For [Rachel](#), who gave me the loveliest, most thoughtful Christmukkah present today — it meant so much to me and I didn't quite know how to express it in words. So here is your Christmukkah present, my friend, based off of an idea we talked about all the way back when we still talked via tumblr messenger. I'm so glad we met. Love you <3

And a big thank you to [Ollie](#), who helped me bounce some ideas around!

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

At age twelve, Yuuri came to the very important conclusion that Viktor Nikiforov was utterly perfect.

In the years that followed, there was nothing that could make him second-guess this claim—not even the 2005-2006 season, in which Viktor first attempted to choreograph his own (some would say lackluster) free skate; not even the 2006-2007 season, in which he fell during the GPF short program six-minute warm up and had to take the rest of the season off; not even when he came back to the ice the following year with his beautiful, signature long hair chopped off.

Viktor Nikiforov was perfect, and anyone who said otherwise could fight viktorfan1993 and his fifty-two archived appreciation posts on Golden Skate—so long as they were prepared for the arsenal of figure skating knowledge Yuuri had to back himself up. By the time Yuuri left for college, he had already written a dissertation's worth of arguments defending Viktor from claims of flutzes, PCS inflation, and even—once—doping.

There were seventeen posters on Yuuri's childhood bedroom walls, plus three more in his dorm in Detroit. That made twenty Viktors, complete with perfect hair and perfect skin and a perfect, brilliant smile that shined down on Yuuri from above. Viktor Nikiforov rolled out of bed in the morning with his hair side-swept and neatly kept, his teeth white, his lashes long, his skin as clear as a summer's day. He went to practice every morning at the world's most prestigious rink and ran through flawless programs, after which a single drop of sweat would fall down his temple. He dressed every day in the tasteful haute couture of his magazine covers and his ass was *always* as naturally toned as it appeared on the cover of the 2013 ESPN Body Issue. He explained his programs in press conferences and interviews with perfect English that rolled off his tongue with the relaxed ease of a native speaker.

The Viktor Nikiforov of Yuuri's posters began and ended with the ice. He was a natural talent to whom landing the first ever quad flip was as effortless as breathing, to whom breaking (his own) world records was as inevitable as sunrise. He was constantly evolving at a blistering, breakneck pace that neither the audience nor the media (nor even his own coach, by some accounts) could quite keep up with. For three years, he did not fall once in competition. For five, he won nothing but gold at every single competition that mattered. Expectations had never been so high and yet Viktor Nikiforov always delivered, smiling as they placed the gold medal around his neck.

When Yuuri first saw him from afar at his own debut senior Worlds, he stayed far, far away. Viktor Nikiforov was someone to strive for: a goal to meet, perhaps one to day to even beat. But he was not a man. Not someone to approach. Not someone for Yuuri to reach out to, to congratulate, to hold onto. Because really, how could he even do such a thing?

For all Yuuri felt he knew Viktor Nikiforov, this much was clear: he would only ever know him from afar.

At age twenty-four, Yuuri looks down at Viktor Nikiforov as he thrusts into him one last time, watching as he scrunches up his red-flushed face; as he cries tears of desperate need; as he crests over that final wave of pleasure, digs his nails into Yuuri's shoulder-blades, and *keens*.

That same night, like every night, Yuuri waits while Viktor completes all twelve steps of his twice daily skin-care routine and listens while he debates whether he should start applying the same treatment to the pimples that have suddenly broken out on his butt. He points all four of them out to Yuuri with mournful sighs, but agrees that it's better than the ones that sometimes appear on his chin. "It's because you touch it too much," Yuuri reminds him, and Viktor brings his index finger up to his face, pressing it thoughtfully to his chin and lips.

"Huh, do I?"

"Vitya!"

Here is a non-exhaustive list of the other things Yuuri now knows about Viktor Nikiforov:

In the mornings, Viktor has morning breath and bedhead. He is perpetually fighting a cowlick on the left side of his head and he checks his not-bald-spot at the crown of his head every morning in the mirror.

He applies mascara every morning, since his eyelashes are nearly invisible without it.

He has a slightly crooked tooth, on the top front left. Yuuri sees it sometimes, when Viktor smiles widely.

He has figure skater's feet, bandaged and bruised with a few toenails missing. He also has a thing for feet—but he swears it only started when he met Yuuri.

He is a *bottom*.

Prior to most photo-shoots, he adopts a strict regimen of daily squats. ("We can't all have naturally perfect asses, Yuuri.")

Viktor does not go out with friends. He does not particularly have any.

Viktor practices what he is going to say at every interview and press conference in the hotel bathroom mirror at least three times, and consults Google Translate when necessary.

Viktor falls during practice, and he likes it when Yuuri kisses the bruises on his hip when he goes down on him.

Viktor does not really know how to deal with Yuuri's anxiety yet. Sometimes he says the wrong things. They're working on it.

Viktor has an absolutely spartan training schedule. It may also be called masochistic, or 'fucking insane', depending on who you ask.

Viktor, whenever he seriously fights with Yakov, is preoccupied and emotionally unreachable for days.

Viktor will spend a ridiculous amount of money on three things: 1) first class plane tickets, 2) clothes for his fiancé, and 3) organic non-processed nutrient-rich meals for Makkachin.

Viktor sometimes, occasionally, works up the courage to call his mother. It almost always goes to voicemail.

Viktor cries horridly, uglily, when he finally talks about how it felt—those desperate, clawing, inspiration-sapping years before; the fear of having nowhere to go but down; the loneliness.

On the other hand, he cries beautifully, silently, when he thinks he is being left behind.

He clings to Yuuri like a lifeline when he learns that he isn't.

Viktor is kind. He is sweet. He forgives.

...

Yuuri would love to say that he knew better, all those years before. How wonderfully romantic it would be, to say he saw Viktor for who he was even all those years ago; that out of hordes of worldwide fans only Yuuri watched the competitions and interviews and saw Viktor Nikiforov for who he truly was.

But it would be a lie. Yuuri idolized Viktor, put him on a pedestal like everyone else, jerked off to his posters like everyone else, believed the myth that Viktor was effortlessly, naturally talented *just like everyone else*.

And really, how could Yuuri have known? Though he lived his life in front of cameras, the real Viktor Nikiforov was hidden in plain sight—behind a smile Yuuri had loved and cherished for so many years with no idea it could be fake.

Yuuri is making up for it now, he thinks, by loving every bit of every version of Viktor he can get his hands on. The real Viktor is soft and malleable, kind but honest. He is the single hardest worker Yuuri has ever met. He has an endless well of self-control and the most genuine smile in the world and twenty-seven years' worth of pent-up love to give, and he is only just now learning what to do with it.

"I love you," Viktor whispers in his ear as they fall asleep, clinging to him like an octopus beneath the covers. "I love you," he whispers again in the mornings as he hands Yuuri a steaming cup of tea.

He takes two days off of training when Makkachin gets sick. He choreographs an edgy exhibition skate for Yuri. He gives Georgi his own favorite eyeshadow palette for his (their)

birthday. He (semi-secretly) teaches Mila the triple axel. And he sometimes even listens to Yakov.

Somehow, despite years of hero-worship, Yuuri never anticipated Viktor Nikiforov being so easy to love.

...

When Yuuri moves to St. Petersburg shortly after the Barcelona Grand Prix Final, he suddenly finds Viktor his roommate, fiancé, coach, competitor, and rink-mate all at once. He also finds that he remembers very little from the semester of Russian he took in college. His Generalized Anxiety Disorder does not find any of these things particularly appealing.

It is a rough winter.

Still, their second fight (if Yuuri blindsiding Viktor in a hotel room in Spain that first time can be considered a *fight*) does not happen until a few weeks before Worlds, and it's about... well, a lot of things. Mostly, though, it's about Viktor's spartan (read: masochistic, or 'fucking insane') training and coaching schedule, Viktor's inability to notice that he is running himself into the ground, and Yuuri's unwillingness to communicate in any meaningful way how much he hates it.

Viktor works himself straight into a bout of flu, insists on going to practice anyway, collapses on the ice, and when he stops being delirious with fever they have an argument that neither of them particularly care to remember.

Viktor gets better and agrees to cut back his training schedule, despite the upcoming competition. Yuuri agrees to communicate. They both apologize for the things that should never have been said. They emerge stronger.

...

At Worlds, Yuuri gets gold, Yuri gets silver, and Viktor gets bronze.

None of them break world records, but Yuuri cries while he watches his fiancé perform from the kiss and cry. His programs, choreographed last minute in December for his mid-season return, have a similar theme to Yuuri's—one about finding new love, another about regaining a love thought to be lost. His presentation scores are higher than ever and he comes within one point of Yuri and two of his fiancé, both skaters having beaten him with routines *he* choreographed. They hold hands on the podium, the two of them. Yuri not-so-politely requests they get a room.

And yet, *and yet*, at the press conference:

“Mr. Nikiforov, how does it feel to have failed to win gold for the first time in five years?”

Yuuri is incredibly, dangerously close to just about losing it when he feels Viktor’s hand squeeze his under the table.

“I am very happy with what I accomplished today. Skaters Katsuki and Plisetsky performed beautifully, and they deserve every point they got. I could not be more proud.”

The smile on his face is heart-shaped but sharp. Yuuri squeezes his hand back, and he muses that the reporter is lucky they both have such good self control.

...

Except here’s the thing: Drunk Yuuri has *shit* self control, and it’s after his fifth glass of champagne at the banquet that he overhears the conversation.

“...been talking about it forever, but I was beginning to think I’d never witness it.”

“Right? I’d have thought maybe second, but third?”

“Definitely past his prime.”

Yuuri does not hate many people, but he harbors an intense, particular dislike for the longstanding Eurosport commentator duo standing near the table to his left. At least thirty of his fifty-two Viktor Nikiforov Appreciation Posts on Golden Skate were motivated by spite after hearing these two basically slander Viktor’s programs with only the thinnest of professional veneer. They were wrong, of course. Always wrong.

“About time, honestly.”

“Really. I mean, there’s only so far you can go on talent alone, and with taking time off...”

“Exactly. If you’re not willing to put in the work, well. We all saw what happened.”

“Do you think he will retire?”

“He *should*. Just cut his losses. Bottom of the podium this time, and he must know there’s only one direction to go from h—”

Yuuri grabs a spoon off of the nearest table and raps it against his sixth flute of champagne. The sharp sound echoes through the banquet hall until every head has turned to face him. He downs the rest of the wine in one go, sets it down on the table, picks up a new, full glass, and clears his throat.

“I’d like to make a toast.”

It’s unorthodox, sure, but so was pole dancing and stripping to their underwear. Viktor, who had previously been on the other side of the room talking to sponsors, is summoned to his side in an instant.

“Yuuri...”

“It’s okay,” Yuuri slurs, and pats his fiancé’s cheek fondly. “I know what I’m doing.”

“Go Yuuri!” someone cheers. It sounds like Phichit.

“I just want to say,” Yuuri begins, projecting his voice across the large hall, “that this season has been amazing.”

“You bet it has, Mr. Gold Medalist,” someone that sounds a lot like Chris heckles. Yuuri blushes madly.

“That’s not what I—!” He hiccups. “I *mean* that I’m really proud of all of us. Our sport demands a lot and... and we put so much of ourselves into it, but even at competitions like this it doesn’t feel like it only comes down to just— just the numbers on the scoreboard. Leo, you had a personal best! Mila, you landed a triple axel! And Emil, you landed *four clean quads*, which was *so cool*, and Yurio, you landed your first quad lutz in competition, and...”

Yuuri trails off, letting his attention wander where it always wants to go—to the man at his side. He looks up at Viktor, love blooming in his chest.

“And Viktor Nikiforov. Our Living Legend. You came back midseason after half a year off, broke your own PCS records with some of your most beautiful skating *ever*, choreographed five of the medalists’ six programs...”

“Oi, Katsudon, we get it, your boyfriend’s great—”

“*Fiancé.*”

“Oh!” Phichit emerges from a crowd of skaters, his eye wide and his phone camera held up, no doubt videoing the whole thing. “That’s right! Viktor, you said you’d get married after Yuuri won gold!”

Yuri scoffs. “Please, they’ve been planning the wedding nonstop since December. God, this went off the rails, Katsudon, wasn’t this supposed to be a toast?”

Someone yells, “To the Katsuki-Nikiforovs!” and the entire room raises their glasses, echoing it back. Yuuri squeaks, and Viktor laughs.

“No, that’s not what I—!” Everyone’s attention returns to him, and he squares his shoulders. “This sport is just so *great*, and exciting, and...” He glances to his left, his suddenly cutting gaze falling on two very specific people. “And everyone’s pushing to be their very best *that’s* what it’s all about. Everyone here tonight deserves to be proud.”

“Yuuri, love,” Viktor says, taking Yuuri’s hand holding the champagne flute and raising it high along with his own. “What are we toasting?”

Yuuri beams. “To figure skating!”

And the room echoes, “To figure skating!”

Yuuri downs glass number seven, and then the dancing begins.

...

“Yuuri?”

Viktor’s voice is early-morning-quiet and scratchy with sleep. Their alarm is still ringing in their ears from when it had woken them so cruelly a moment ago, reminding them of the plane home they have to catch in four hours. The first rays of sunshine fall pale and peaceful on the comforter above their feet and Viktor traces figures on Yuuri’s bare chest with his index finger. It’s so pleasant that Yuuri almost forgets about the headache slowly making itself known between his temples.

“Hm?”

“What was that, last night?”

“Mm, nothing.”

“Are you sure?”

“Mhm.”

“It had nothing to do with those reporters at the press conference?”

“Ah, well... maybe some of it.”

An amused smile tugs at the corner of Viktor’s lips. “And the rest?”

“Eh, they don’t deserve for me to say their names...”

Viktor chuckles. “Yuuri,” he teases, stretching out the name in a way that always makes Yuuri feel like he’s going to melt right into the mattress. “Are you talking about Beaufort and Smith?”

Yuuri gasps. “They certainly don’t deserve for *you* to say their names!” He’s half kidding. He still feels a little drunk.

“Mm, they’re not all bad, some of their commentary is valid.”

“It is *not*. ”

“They were the only ones who caught how overscored I was in Tokyo last y—”

“Viktor Nikiforov, you have never been overscored in your *life*. ”

Viktor laughs. “If you say so.”

“I *do*. ”

“I suppose they weren’t impressed by my bronze medal.”

“It’s like they didn’t even watch the competition!”

Viktor gives up on drawing figures and places his palm flat against Yuuri’s chest. The warmth seeps through Yuuri’s skin, between his ribs, into his heart. “Yuuri, darling, you know it doesn’t matter.”

“I know.”

“I have never been more proud of a medal than the one I earned yesterday.”

“I know. You worked so hard for it.” Yuuri tucks his head into Viktor’s shoulder. “I’m really proud of you, too.”

“And that’s what matters.”

“Yes,” Yuuri agrees.

“Hm,” Viktor muses suddenly, propping himself up on his elbow, and Yuuri pulls his head away to look up at him. “Actually, I take it back.”

“Take what back?”

“What I said, about my bronze.”

“Oh?”

“Yes. I’m far prouder of your gold.”

Their smiles stretch like the sunrise on the horizon and they kiss, the sky brightening slowly outside their window, and—

And it’s as perfect as anything could possibly be.

End Notes

Sorry, Eurosport, I actually love your commentators. It's nothing personal, promise.

Thank you so much for reading, I hope you enjoyed! Please leave a comment and let me know what you think <3

find me on tumblr at [stammiviktor](#)

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