

Are you a library book? Because I can't stop checking you out.

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by [AriWrote](#)

Summary

Yuuri works at his family's bookstore. Viktor is his favorite author. Somehow he doesn't realize the cute stranger making eyes at him in the self-help book section is his idol. Yuri just really wants a break.

Notes

A mediocre writer writes about a super talented writer falling in love with a bookstore employee. What happens next will probably not shock you.
(A.K.A. I Looked At Bad Book Pick Up Lines For That Title. Sue Me. The other options were, "Baby, if you were words on a page, you'd be what they call fine print!" and "I like books, you like books, why don't we start writing the story of us?"')

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

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

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

Yuuri usually loved working at his family's bookstore. It was a quiet, well-loved place where the customers that visited almost always knew each other by name. His family had done their best to make Yu-topia Akatsuki as comfortable as a library, and they had succeeded. Old chairs with patchwork pillows and bean bags were scattered around the room for any who wished to sample the books before buying. It often smelled of the fresh baked goods his mother insisted they offer (though Yuuri couldn't complain, given that he ate most of them). Sometime ago, there'd even been a little poodle that would sit in the window and entreat all who passed to wander in and pet it. That poodle was gone now, but his memory lived on in the little picture by the counter.

What made Yuuri doubt his love for his job were moments like this. A strange man with a personality that managed to take over the entirety of the bookstore had stumbled in during one of Yuuri's unofficial breaks and was doing his best to make sure Yuuri knew it. This was mostly through unnecessarily lengthy eye-contact and too wide smiles while he leafed through books he obviously had no interest in.

Before the strange man had interrupted, Yuuri had been in the process of trying to start the newest book from his favorite author, Viktor Nikiforov. It was supposed to be some dramatic story of a skater on the verge of retirement who turns to coaching after watching a young skater dance his program, and the relationship with his new pupil. It'd been getting rave reviews, and Yuuri had practically cried when they'd gotten the first copies. It had taken Mari to convince him not to 'misplace' a book into his personal collection.

While Yuuri gazed mournfully at the book sitting unread beside him, the new guy finally got up the courage to approach the counter. Up close, Yuuri could admit the guy was pretty attractive. He was tall, and built like a model. His hair, a silver-ish gray, was styled to perfection. His eyes were the kind of blue poets would write sonnets about, and had a mischievous gleam that would probably ensnare most who looked at him. Maybe it would have even worked on Yuuri, if circumstances were better.

Too bad he'd gotten in the middle of Yuuri and Viktor Nikiforov.

"Soooo," the man said, drawing out the sound. His accent, thick but artificially so, was one the Yuuri couldn't quite place, "what would the cute clerk recommend for me?"

Yuuri sighed, and plastered on his best customer service smile on, "Well, what are you looking for?"

The man blinked, maybe surprised he hadn't elicited at least some reaction from Yuuri, but quickly recovered, "Whatever you like is fine."

Yuuri pursed his lips, “We’ve just received Viktor Nikiforov’s newest novel, if that would interest you.”

“Viktor... Nikiforov. You are recommending me Viktor Nikiforov,” The man said, his eyes lighting up and something like a laugh escaping his lips.

Yuuri’s brow furrowed. Did this man have some kind of problem with Viktor’s work? Yuuri wasn’t even aware it was possible to have problem with the world’s greatest author. Feeling as though he somehow needed to defend his answer, Yuuri continued, “Yes, I did. He happens to be my favorite author. Is there something wrong with that?”

“No, nothing wrong with that,” the man said, his too wide small fading into something more natural. He leaned forward and propped his cheek up with his elbow, “So what about him do you like?”

If Yuuri were to give a truthful answer, they’d be here all day. He could write papers on Viktor Nikiforov’s work, and nearly had on one memorable occasion. Of course, he doubted that this man would want to hear Yuuri ramble on like an obsessive fan, even if that was exactly what he was. A condensed version would have to suffice, “He’s just... It’s like he’s found the way to inscribe magic into his novels. It’s cliché, I know, but with each word he pulls you into this world he’s masterfully created. The people, the places, it all feels so real, like I’m flipping through an old scrapbook instead of a storybook. He really loves his work, and it shows.”

“Is that so?” The man muttered, seeming more focused on Yuri than the words he spoke. His eyes closed, and he let out a joyful hum before they fluttered open again. In a flurry of motion that had Yuuri’s head spinning, the man jumped up, clapped his hands together, and said, “I guess I’ll start with this one,” before reaching for Yuuri’s copy of Victor Nikiforov’s newest books.

Yuuri stared in horror at the book held in the stranger’s arm. He reminded himself that the proper response to someone trying to buy a book was not a screech befitting of the last cry of a dying animal and gave the man a weak smile. “Will that be all?”

“I believe so,” he replied, his accent noticeably lighter than when he’d first approached the counter. The man went to hand over the book before pausing, “Ah- Uhm-”

Yuuri reached forward to take the book, but felt resistance when he tried to pull it towards him. “Yes?”

The man’s cheek turned a shade of pink and his demeanor shifted into something almost bashful. “I- Uh, want to know- and don’t think this is a date-”

Yuuri wondered if the man knew that the simple use of that word made Yuuri think this man was moments from asking him on a date.

“But, would you be all that opposed to maybe going out for coffee sometime? To talk about the book, of course. Nothing else,” the man said, giving Yuuri a gentle smile. “You seem to know a lot about Viktor Nikiforov.”

And well... Yuuri wasn't sure how to respond to that. He really wasn't the kind of person to skip out on a chance to talk about his idol. Then again, given that the man had opened up with some awkward attempt a flirting, he doubted that any coffee-shop book meet-up would stay strictly coffee-shop book meet-up.

Yuuri gave the man a once-over. He *was* sort of cute. It couldn't hurt to give him a chance, could it?

"Sure, I'd love to," he said, hoping desperately he wouldn't come to regret those words.

Yuri, who had been waiting outside the bookstore since Viktor had decided that the boy sitting at counter was 'too cute to pass up' (his words, not Yuri's), took one look at the book Viktor was holding in his arms and scoffed, "You seriously bought your own book because the cashier was cute?"

Viktor got that dreamy, love-struck fool look on his face that always made Yuri want to throw up a little. He hugged the book in his arms tight, and mumbled more to himself than to Yuri, "I think I found my muse."

Chapter End Notes

I feel like I should tag: "Inaccurate depiction of Tired Employee's Reaction to Flirting" but that should probably be understood with the 'bookstore au' tag.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Warning: Don't expect chapters to come out this fast. Last episode just gave me enough inspiration to write this one.

To Yuri's complete and utter surprise, Viktor was oddly silent on the whole cute bookstore employee front. In fact, he seemed willing to talk about everything, *but* the cute bookstore employee. He even asked Yuri how his classes were going, which Viktor almost never did.

Normally, Yuri would be thankful for the silence. Viktor was talented, but that talent didn't magically make him more bearable. However, if Viktor was being silent about something, especially about something that he had so boldly claimed to be his muse, well that meant something was up.

"What's his name?" Yuri said, the words sounding harsher than he intended.

"Eh?" Viktor said, half-dazed. His head jerked up from where it had been staring at the ground, "Whose name?"

Yuri quirked an eyebrow and nodded to the book Viktor still hadn't stopped holding for dear life. "Your muse," he grumbled, and made certain to put air quotes around the word 'muse', "or did you not find that out?"

"Of course I did!" Viktor frowned; his brow furrowing and making wrinkles appear on his forehead, "He had a nametag. It was Yuuri."

"Yu-" Yuri spat, staring wide eyed at Viktor, "His name is fucking Yuri?"

"Language!" Viktor shouted, maybe trying to pass himself off as the good influence he definitely wasn't, "And don't worry. It had two u's. It's different... ish."

"Ugh," Yuri groaned, stopping to check that they were in fact going towards Viktor's hotel and not their deaths, "You have to find another muse. I refused to let you fall for someone who has my own fucking name."

Petty as always, Viktor mumbled, "Well, seeing as he's older than you it would probably be the other way around."

Yuri side-eyed Viktor and let out a growl, "I'll let that one pass if you tell me what exactly happened in there."

“Nothing,” said Viktor, quicker than an honest man would.

“Nothing? You’re telling me that nothing led to you stumbling out of there like a love-struck fool, clutching your own book to your chest like it was a love letter.” Yuri scoffed. “I’m calling bullshit.”

Viktor huffed, “You’re too young to have such a dirty mouth.”

“And you’re too old for this rom-com setting,” Yuri replied, not missing a beat. “So I guess we’re even.”

Viktor froze in his tracks, prompting Yuri to pause as well or risk getting separated from him. He spun around to look at what was causing this halt in progression.

It was Viktor, mid-crisis. “I am getting old, aren’t I? Oh god, my hair is falling out and I found a gray hair this-”

“Viktor,” Yuri said, cutting the man off before he could devolve further into this weird aging crisis, “that’s your natural hair color.”

“Oh.”

“Yes,” Yuri groaned, “and don’t think that’s getting you out of telling me. Nikiforov, I swear to god, if this is going to be something big, I don’t want to be caught off guard.”

Viktor took a deep breath, and began to talk.

And didn’t stop talking until they arrived at the hotel.

(Yuri wasn’t aware so much could be said about a ten minute interaction, but leave it to a world famous author to find a way.)

Once Viktor’s tale of his daring ‘seduction’ was over, there was only one thing left for Yuri to do. He laughed, and only laughed harder after Viktor’s face fell into something that might vaguely be called embarrassment. He did eventually calm down, and it was only then that he managed to ask, “So, how exactly are you going to handle this ‘not-date-totally-a-date’ meet up without letting him realize who you are?”

Viktor blinked, “I’m not supposed to let him know?”

Yuri slapped his palm against his forehead and let out a groan. He ignored the awkward stares from the rest of the people in the hotel lobby. “What? Were you planning to show up with an armful of signed books, a dazzling smile, and announce to this boy that you are the very author he apparently adores?”

Viktor’s silence informed him that, yes that was exactly what he had planned to do.

“Don’t you think that might... scare him off?”

“You think?” Viktor said, genuinely looking concerned.

Yuri shook his head, and grumbled, "One of us has to."

"So, Yuuri," Phichit said. He was sprawled across at least four beanbags that he had stolen from all across the shop, looking way too awake for someone who had just traveled all the way from Thailand on two hours of sleep, "what have you been up to since we last talked?"

Yuuri rolled his eyes, "The last time we talked was yesterday."

"And?" Phichit replied, looking scandalized, "It's different now! I was in Bangkok yesterday! Now I'm sitting here in your store, punishing you for working on the day I arrived. Something amazing could have happened in between now and then. Any self-respecting best friend would ask."

Yuuri couldn't help but laugh, "This is your version of punishment?"

Phichit shrugged and sunk lower into the bean bags, "You can't technically close down with me here, right?"

"Well, I mean-" He could, but he had just been too lazy to actually start the process.

"And that means any weird old guy can wander in looking for erotica," Phichit said, "which I mean, that image is punishment enough."

"We don't actually sell erotica," Yuuri replied. "The closest we have are housewife romances."

Phichit pulled a face, "Like the ones with the shirtless men with flowing hair and high def six-pack?"

"Yeah. Mari likes them, though she'd deny it to the ends of the earth."

Phichit snorted and shuffled over on his bean bag bed. He patted the empty space it left and said, "Enough about your sister's questionable taste in literature and more on the exciting life of Katsuki Yuuri. That is why I'm here, after all."

Yuuri, who had never been particularly good at denying Phichit anything, took the offered seat and leaned back, "Well, if that's why you're here, you are in for a lot of disappointment."

"Nonsense," Phichit replied, "surely there must be something. Hear any good gossip? Have to deal with an annoying customer? A ghost randomly took residence in your building? Anything?"

"Actually," Yuuri said, remembering the strange man from before, "a customer might have asked me out on a date disguised as a discussion on Viktor Nikiforov."

Phichit nodded, "Well, smart person. The way to a Yuuri's heart is through anything Nikiforov. Did you accept?"

Yuuri shrugged, “Yeah, do you think I shouldn’t have? He left his phone number on the receipt and told me to text him later so we could plan, or something.”

“Oh, wow,” Phichit said, before his expression grew mischievous and he latched on to Yuuri’s arm, “Was he cute? Did you get a name?”

Yuuri leaned back, mildly terrified of Phichit’s new found enthusiasm, “Uh... Sort of, and no? He forgot, I think. He seemed pretty flighty.”

“Ooooooh,” Phichit said, “text him now. Get his name and a selfie. Tell him your best friend needs one to judge if he’s really ready for you.”

“Phichit!” Yuuri gasped, “I am not texting some guy at eleven to ask him for a selfie.”

Phichit’s eyes lit up, “I could-”

“No,” was Yuuri’s reply.

Phichit stuck his tongue out and muttered, “Yuuri Katsuki, you are no fun.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Pre-warning for the SHEER ABUNDANCE OF ITALICS. I might have shed tears over the formatting (moving this over to tumblr is going to give me gray hair, I swear). I also did manage to sort of get a beta reader (for this chapter), so woo. Hopefully less mistakes this time. She read this five times, bless her. I can't even read my own writing that many times.

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

Viktor had been staring at this page for nearly an hour. It had been blank for at least half that time. Occasionally he would type a word here and there, but within minutes he would groan and slam down the backspace, erasing any proof that he'd made progress. He wasn't exactly sure the cause for this block, but he did know his phone buzzing beside him did nothing for his focus. His brain was mush and the only thought that made it through was his regret over forgetting to pack his medication.

He felt a pillow connect with his face and heard Yuri's shout of, "For the love of God, turn off your phone before I turn it off permanently myself. Just because you can survive on no sleep, does not mean the rest of us can," moments later.

Viktor chuckled and added the pillow to the steadily growing nest beneath him. He closed his computer, admitting to himself that he wouldn't get anymore work done in the next thirty minutes than he had in the previous. He grabbed his phone, figuring he might as well check to see what all the fuss was before turning it off.

Like he expected, there were at least three missed calls and one voicemail from Yakov. He wasn't going to listen to the message tonight, but he knew exactly what it was about. "What's the estimated due date for the next manuscript? When are you returning to Russia? What the hell were you thinking when you mentioned quitting?"

The rest were text messages. One from Chris just said, "Wanna help me do research for my new novel?" followed by a grotesque amount of hearts. Viktor snorted and sent a quick reply back. Within minutes, Chris responded with enough sad faces to put the hearts to shame.

The other was from an unknown number.

Hey.

Viktor frowned and typed back a quick response, *May I ask who this is?*

This is Yuuri's phone.

But not Yuuri? He typed.

Nope. I stole it from him while he slept. Figured it'd be my only chance.

Chance? Viktor wondered. What was this person getting at? *Who is this?*

Phichit, or as I like to call myself, Yuuri's number one.

Viktor froze. *Boyfriend?* He typed back.

There was a tense moment before the response finally came through.

Oh my god, dude. Noooooo. Don't you worry. Yuuri is single.

Very single.

Before Viktor could respond, Yuri yelled, "What the fuck happened to turning it off?"

"Give me a moment," he said, and pulled a pillow from his nest to throw towards Yuri's bed. "If it's bothering you so much, cover your ears."

Yuri might have flipped him off. Viktor's eyes were too trained on his phone to see.

Before you get a chance to change that, however, I'm going to need a picture.

And a name, but mostly that picture.

Viktor probably should have denied that he had any intentions of 'changing that'. That would be the proper thing to do. He had very clearly told Yuuri that it wasn't a date, after all. His fingers hovered over the keyboard, before he switched over to photos.

He chose the one of him cuddling next to Maccachin, the dog's head resting on his chest. His eyes are closed, feigning sleep while his mother giggled and tried to take a picture. It's one of his best photos. Both he and Maccachin are exceptionally cute in it.

The reply is instant.

Awww!

Cute dog.

Viktor beamed. Maccachin was the cutest dog, a fact Viktor would argue day and night if given the opportunity.

If he was with you, I can understand why Yuuri agreed.

Nope, Viktor typed, still smiling, Maccachin is with my family. I won him over with my own charm.

...Or maybe he just felt pity for you.

Viktor gasped, clutching at his chest even though the only person who could see was Yuri, whose head was currently buried underneath a pillow. He frowned as he typed out his response, *Rude!*

Pfff, don't get worked up. I'm sure Yuuri wasn't entirely motivated by pity.

He was like 80% motivated by your offer to actually listen to his Nikiforov rambling.

Viktor did not blush. There were no witnesses to prove otherwise.

So what about that name though? I refuse to let Yuuri go out on a totally serious literary not-date with a stranger.

Viktor paused. He hadn't actually considered that far. Yuri had told him not announce that he was the world famous author Yuuri adored. However, if he wasn't supposed to be Viktor Nikiforov, who was he supposed to be? Would Chris mind if Viktor borrowed his name? Probably not, but Viktor wasn't too interested in associating anything Yuuri with anything Chris. Viktor had written dozens of books, had created hundreds of characters, and the thing that stumps him was this? Maybe the writer's block was worse than he thought.

In the end, all he could think to type was the truth. *Would you believe me if I said it was Viktor?*

Next you'll tell me your last name is Nikiforov.

Viktor glanced over at Yuri and typed, *Plisetsky, actually. I'm Russian, quite a few of us are named Viktor. Not my fault that one of us got famous.*

Two minutes passed with no answer. Another five passed with not even a hint of a forthcoming reply. Normally he wouldn't be so worried about a reply taking this long. He'd taken longer to reply to important messages himself. This time, however, he couldn't help but get worried. Did Phichit not believe him? Oh god, what if he somehow knew who Viktor was? He should have used Chris's name after all.

His phone let out a soft ding.

Uhm... This is Yuuri.

Viktor let out a sigh of relief and typed, *What happened to Phichit?*

Nothing.

Viktor chuckled softly to himself. He couldn't help but feel a bit of sympathy for Phichit, even if the boy wasn't entirely blameless. He began to type out a response, but another message popped up.

Sorry that he bugged you so late at night. He can be... enthusiastic about things once he's set his mind to them.

It's fine! I was actually already up, Viktor responded. His eyes flickered to the copy of his own book lying innocently unopened on the bedside table. He was going to have to figure out what to do about that. *I was reading that book you gave me.*

Over and over again, the 'Yuuri is typing' message would pop up and over and over again, it would disappear for a few minutes before returning. Viktor laughed to himself, wondering what on Earth Yuuri could be typing. Eventually, a message appeared.

Oh! I hope you're enjoying it. I'm almost done with it!

Well, while I'd loved to talk about it, I think Phichit and I have taken up enough of your time.

Viktor, right? I hope you have a good night.

I am, he typed. He paused for a moment before adding, *Good night to you too, Yuuri.*

Good night to you too, Yuuri.

"Yuuuuuuri," Phichit cried from Yuuri's bed. He had an ice-pack pressed to the place where Yuuri had accidentally elbowed him while they were fighting over the phone. The only reason he was still sitting on Yuuri's bed was because he kept frowning and gesturing to it. "You're smiling."

Yuuri clamped a hand over his mouth and let out a muffled, "I don't know what you mean."

Phichit didn't even have the decency to pretend he wasn't laughing.

Chapter End Notes

It might be obvious or it might not (or maybe you've read my rambles on [tumblr](#)), but the medication line is in reference to adhd medication. You can rip that self-indulgent headcanon that Viktor has ADHD out of my cold dead hands.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

I am taking so freaking long with the date, Jesus Christ. I swear the next chapter is actual Yuuri-Viktor interaction. Like it's written. It was originally going to be added to this chapter, but the general consensus from the small group I have somehow found myself with says that it worked better as two. Blame them.

Edit: That doesn't mean I don't appreciate them.

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

Viktor was hiding something. Yuri knew he was. It wasn't even like he was being particularly subtle about it. Hell, as soon as Yuri had woken up, Viktor was clinging to him and rambling on about going to all these places that Yuri had shown a passing interest in. He had played along, never one to pass up a rare moment of Nikiforov generosity, but that didn't mean he wasn't going to find an answer. Eventually. Probably, after Viktor got done paying for their tickets to the zoo.

Once the tickets were safely paid for, Yuri struck, "Spill. You're hiding something."

Viktor pouted. To an outsider, he would look the picture of innocence. To Yuri, he looked like the guilty asshole he was. "I don't know what on earth you could mean, Yuri." He sighed and tilted his head. "Can't a guy be nice without being accused of hiding something?"

"Some people can," Yuri said, poking Viktor in his chest. "You cannot, especially when you've got an expression like that."

Viktor's expression twisted, as if trying to reconfigure itself into something less obviously guilty. Eventually he gave up and settled on bashful shame. He shrugged and muttered, "Don't be mad, okay?"

Yuri shoved his hands in his pockets, and deliberately ignored the question in favor of checking the map. Only after he had found the location of the Big Cats exhibit did he answer, "I'll decide what I feel once you tell me."

Yuri did not wait for a response before heading off towards the exhibit. He did hear Viktor's hurried footsteps, and an annoyed huff a few moments later, which meant Viktor was following him. He did not check over his shoulder to see, but did hear, "Remember Yuuri?"

Of course he remembered Yuuri. It was kind of hard to forget Yuuri with Viktor around. "That name-stealing boy who's dumb enough to agree to go out with you?"

"He's-" Yuri glanced over at Viktor to see him frowning. "He's not dumb!"

Yuri rolled his eyes, “Whatever, so what’s he got to do with this? I doubt this is because you’re trying to make up for abandoning me to go talk to some cute boy you’ve got a crush on.”

“It could be,” muttered Viktor, which meant it wasn’t. There was a moment of silence before, “You promise you won’t get mad?”

Yuri stopped in his tracks, letting out a loud sigh that turned a few heads. “Viktor, I swear to God if you don’t-

“I used your name,” Viktor blurted out, cutting off Yuri before he could even finish the thought, “for my fake identity. Well, your last name.”

If human expressions could properly express error messages, Yuri was sure his face would have been broadcasting, “Error: Yuri.exe has stopped working,” right about then. There was just too much to really process in that moment. He blinked and stuttered, “You did what? Your what?”

“I used your last name when Yuuri’s friend asked me for my name. I didn’t know anything better to use. I guess I could have used Yakov’s and for a moment I was thinking about borrowing Chris’s name but I could never remember to-” Yuri reached up and slapped a hand over Viktor’s mouth.

He growled, “Why the hell would you think that was a good idea?”

“You told me to,” Viktor said, wrenching the hand from his mouth. “You said I shouldn’t tell him who I am! So I didn’t!”

And to that, Yuri couldn’t say anything. He *had* told Viktor to keep quiet on the Nikiforov thing. He just hadn’t expected him to go this route in his effort to hide his identity. He probably should have anticipated it though. This was Viktor Nikiforov they were talking about. Or Viktor Plisetsky, depending on who you asked. Yuri shuddered.

“So what does this mean?” He asked.

“So you’re not mad,” Viktor said, a smile creeping onto his lips.

“No, I am mad,” Yuri bit, each word blunt and bitter, “but there’s really nothing I can do. I’ll play along, but don’t expect me to do it for free.”

Viktor, ignoring the last part, clapped his hands together and began to ramble, “So we need a cover story. I doubt it’ll be important, but it could be. Are we brothers? Are we cousins? Am I your uncle? Do we even look similar enough to pass for brothers? Should one of us be adopted or something? Which do you prefer, Yuri?”

Yuri sighed, and stared longingly at the animals sunbathing in their enclosures. He debated the merits of offering Viktor to the tigers. “Whatever the hell you want, Nikiforov.”

He ignored the overly cheerful, “It’s Plisetsky now, silly Yuri.”

Sorry for the short notice, but do you think we could meet up sometime today or tomorrow? I just finished the book!

He'd been in the middle of begging Yuuko to let him and Phichit borrow her ice rink for the day when he'd gotten the message. He paused; staring at the name before it finally clicked who it was. He quickly typed out a response to Viktor, which basically boiled down to, 'Can't today, maybe tomorrow?'

Before he could press send, he heard a voice beside his ear say, "You should go out today," and nearly dropped his poor, defenseless phone on the unforgiving concrete.

He spun around, nearly smacking Phichit in the face with said phone, and sputtered, "What?"

"I think you should go," Phichit said, shrugging. "I was planning on exploring for a little while, anyway. I can scout out all the fun places you don't know about."

"You've never been here before, Phichit." Yuuri said. "You'll get lost."

Before Phichit could argue, Yuuko leaned over the counter, a certain glimmer in her eyes, and asked, "What's all this about?"

"Yuuri's found himself a cute guy, and he's being difficult about meeting him," Phichit said, a sly grin forming on his face.

"Oh!" Yuuko said, hands coming up to cover her mouth, "Oh?"

Yuuri sighed, rubbing at his temple, "It isn't a date."

He ignored Phichit mouthing, 'It totally is,' to Yuuko.

"Phichit, like I said, Viktor can wait," he continued. "We already had plans."

"His name is Viktor!" Yuuko squealed, reaching out to grab for Phichit's arm.

"He's Russian. Everyone –"

Phichit cut him off, "He won Yuuri over by promising to talk to him about Nikiforov."

Yuuko's grip on Phichit tightened and she practically shrieked, "You should go! I can take Phichit around and you can talk all about books with this cute Viktor guy."

Yuuri stared helplessly at his best friends. Both had terrifying grins on their faces, and a mischievous glint to their eyes. With a sigh, he deleted the message and quickly typed a 'Sure, where?' before either Phichit or Yuuko could steal it and type something worse.

Episode 10 has killed me. I am dead. My tombstone will read, "Here lies Ari, dead just about when they expected and because YUURI KATSUKI CAN POLE DANCE."

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Alas, we must say goodbye to the 'Not Beta Read' tag, because this is very beta read. Dear god, I started this with no one and ended up with three people.

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

Yuuri hadn't known why Phichit was so eager for him to go out with Viktor. Now, sitting alone while he waited for the man to arrive, ignoring the pointed stares from his ill-disguised friends, he knew why. He'd expected this kind of thing out of Phichit or Yuuko's kids, not Yuuko herself.

His fingers tapped against the side of his drink, a desperate attempt to calm the jittery feeling welling up in him. The book *Stammi Vicino, Non Te Ne Anadare* stared up at him from the table and did nothing to calm those nerves. He picked it up, and flicked through the pages. The words passed by, unread.

"Yuuri?"

He glanced up, and found himself face-to-face with Viktor. He'd already slung his coat over the side of the chair, and was in the process of removing the scarf around his neck. When he met Yuuri's eyes, Viktor smiled. "Enjoying the book?"

"I think it's his best one yet," Yuuri replied, unable to hold back the excitement that had been bubbling since he'd finished. To be truthful, Yuuri had been dying to talk about it. Phichit had been no help, as he still hadn't finished the other four Nikiforov books Yuuri had lent him. Yuuko's girls had stolen her copy, and she refused to get spoiled. Minako had promised to read it, but apparently *her* favorite author had released their newest novel and that took priority. So Yuuri was left with only Viktor to turn to.

Speaking of... Viktor was currently looking at Yuuri with an unreadable expression. His mouth had formed into a perfect 'o'. His eyes, still larkspur blue and unfair to the world, were wide. Yuuri might have called it surprise if it wasn't for the calculating glimmer in Viktor's eyes. There were a thousand things flickering through them, but Viktor remained silent. With the same expression still on his face, Viktor dropped into his chair with an ungraceful thud. As he leaned forward, his tone took on a conspiratorial note. "What was your favorite part?"

Yuuri could feel the smile on his features, wide and maybe a tad too enthusiastic. "I'm not even sure I can give you a straight answer."

"Try," Viktor said, returning Yuuri's smile.

“You’re going to regret this,” Yuuri said.

Viktor winked. “Somehow I doubt I will.”

And... Well, that opened the floodgates. Every single moment that had made Yuuri gasp in surprise, hold back laughter in a desperate attempt to not wake those around him, or blink back tears was recounted for Viktor. Viktor only nodded here and there, adding comments during the brief moments of quiet. He laughed at Yuuri’s indignant huffs over certain characters and gave a sympathetic hum when Yuuri talked of how he’d nearly skipped to the end of the book when the dog got sick to ensure it was alright.

“I was scared, okay,” he muttered. “I hate when people kill off animals for cheap tears.”

Viktor let out a little laugh, sudden and infectious in its sound. “Do you really have that little faith in him?”

“Well, no,” Yuuri huffed, “but you can never be sure.” He paused for a moment, before asking, “What about you? It must be boring to just hear me talk. What did you think about it?”

Viktor sputtered, “I- Uh- Well... You see...”

Yuuri snorted, “Did you even read the book?”

“No, I’ve read the book,” Viktor shouted, looking faintly embarrassed. His voice grew softer, “I promise. I’ve read it more times than you would think. It’s just...” Viktor paused, glancing around as if the answer might appear before him, “I’m not very good with words.”

“Really?”

Viktor nodded.

(From the table over, a blonde haired boy broke out into obnoxious laughter.)

“If it helps at all,” Yuuri muttered, “I’m no better. It’s a miracle I was able to talk as much as I did. It’s fine if you just babble on.”

Viktor sighed, and stared down at the table. A silence fell between the two of them. By the time Viktor spoke, the ‘awkward’ silence had begun to edge into ‘uncomfortable’.

“I think it was a bad idea for him to publish it.”

Yuuri blinked, dazed at his companion’s pronouncement. “What do you mean?”

Viktor shook his head, and when he looked back up at Yuuri a smile had replaced itself on his features, “Nothing, nothing.”

Yuuri took a sip of his drink. It was cold and unenjoyable, but at least it didn’t impart him with cryptic phrases that it didn’t want to give answers to. “Did you just not enjoy the book?”

“Oh, no! It’s my favorite of his as well. It’s... definitely more honest than his previous work,” Viktor said, and then quickly added, “or so I think.”

“I got that impression as well,” Yuuri exclaimed, placing the mug back on the table. “I wonder why that is.”

“Who knows,” Viktor said, waving as if to dismiss the topic from the air. “We’ve done all this talking about the good things in the book-”

“I have, you mean” Yuuri muttered.

Viktor continued on as though he hadn’t heard him, “Why don’t we talk about what’s wrong with it? No book is perfect. It’d be a shame to pretend that Nikiforov has managed the impossible.”

Yuuri rolled his eyes, “Since you’re so excited to talk about his faults, you should go first.”

Viktor response was instantaneous, as though he’d prepared a list of faults exactly for this moment. “Don’t you think the main character came on too strong?”

“Hmm, a little bit,” Yuuri hummed, “but it makes a bit more sense what with the whole plot twist. Like, if he was functioning on the idea that this guy remembered him, it makes sense that he’d be a bit more forward than usual.”

“Still...” Viktor grumbled, “Alright then, don’t you think there were way too many descriptive scenes dedicated to characters’ butts?”

“Ehhhh,” Yuuri replied, shrugging, “they were very pretty. I could handle it.”

“Didn’t the relationship move to fast?”

“Time-skips.”

Viktor scrubbed a hand across his face. “Are you always this difficult?”

“I’ll admit you’re making it very tempting to be.” Yuuri smiled. “You want an honest opinion about the worst part of the book?”

Viktor nodded, a grave expression settling on his face.

“The section dedicated entirely to the mechanics of ice skating,” Yuuri said.

Viktor looked like he’d just been slapped. “How can you- That’s important! That was the best part of the book.”

Yuuri couldn’t help the laughter now. “It was ten pages!”

“Ten very important pages,” Viktor huffed.

“If I wanted to know how ice skating worked,” Yuuri said, “I’d pick up a book about ice skating.”

Viktor hummed, and seemed ready to argue the importance of lengthy expositions about ice skating when a low growl interrupted them. Viktor glanced down at his stomach, a tad bashful.

“You should probably get something to eat,” Yuuri said, trying to stifle the giggles

“Maybe,” he said, “but don’t think that this means this discussion is over, Yuuri Katsuki.”

“It is, Viktor Plisetsky, and you know I’m right.”

Viktor, a mature and mostly reasonable adult, stuck his tongue out at Yuuri. “And here I was thinking of buying you something.”

Yuuri watched him walk towards the counter, a little fonder than he’d care to admit. When Viktor returned, with two drinks in hand and a plate balanced on his forearm, Yuuri kept silent. He took the drink and a quick sip confirmed it was hot cocoa. A lucky guess.

“So,” Viktor muttered, poking at his food, “why are you such a fan of Nikiforov’s?”

Yuuri let out a laugh, “Were you even here for the half hour or so?”

“I don’t know,” Viktor said. “I might be suffering amnesia brought about by the trauma of learning you don’t understand the importance of explaining the extremely complicated details of ice skating.”

“Has anyone ever told you that you can be quite dramatic?”

“A few,” Viktor replied.

Yuuri sighed, “My friend Yuuko was actually the first person to ever introduce me to his novels.” Yuuri’s expression suddenly grew very fond. “She might be an even bigger fan of him than I am. She freaked when she heard your name. Maybe that’s why she’s...” Yuuri mumbled the last part, too soft for anybody to hear it.

“Excuse me?” Viktor said.

“She’s... actually here right now,” Yuuri nodded towards where his friends were camped. “So is Phichit.”

Viktor actually had the audacity to wave to them. Yuuri squawked and desperately tried to pull his hand down. “What on earth are you doing?”

“Being polite?” Viktor frowned in confusion, but allowed Yuuri to drag his arm down.

“You’re indulging them,” Yuuri huffed.

Viktor shrugged. “It’s harmless. If it comforts you any, the boy in the horribly tacky animal print jacket is my cousin.”

Yuuri glanced over to the boy. The boy glared in return. With a jolt, Yuuri snapped his attention back to Viktor. Viktor smirked and winked.

Yuuri whispered, “Is he always that hostile?”

“Well,” Viktor said, “It takes a while for him to warm up to you, but when he does he’s just the cutest-”

As if summoned by Viktor’s words, said boy appeared at their table, slamming his hand down in between the two of them. “If you say another word, Viktor, I will end you.”

Yuuri was terrified. Viktor was faintly amused. “Go sit down, Yuri. If you’re hungry, I can give you money.”

The boy –apparently named Yuri as well?– growled for good measure before returning back to his table. Yuuri shivered and clutched his drink tighter. “If that’s what you call cute, I am concerned.”

Viktor, with the nonchalance of someone who’d seen the act before, shrugged and leaned forward, “Anyway, enough about our unwanted chaperones. Anything you want to ask me?”

Yuuri looked Viktor up and down. He took note of the perfectly combed hair, the ways his fingers tapped against the table in a nonsensical pattern, and the flash of *something* behind Viktor’s eyes. Eventually Yuuri replied. “Yes, actually.”

There was pause and Viktor took a deep breath. His fingers sped up their tapping against the table.

Yuuri smiled. “Are you ready to admit this is a date?”

Chapter End Notes

Viktor would 100% have Victor-Hugo-Talking-About-Waterloo long rambles in his books, like no way he wouldn't.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

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

To almost no one's surprise, the first date (and Viktor had been completely willing to call it that after the shock wore off) had not been the last. It had been followed by others of its kind, most of them as simple as the first while some were a bit fancier. Among them was a poorly planned trip to the beach that left Viktor with an embarrassing cold.

Their dates were interspersed by many a late night phone conversations that often ended not because either wanted it to, but because their companions had grown sick of the muffled laughter and other such noises. On the occasion that Viktor gathered the courage, he'd even stop by the bookstore and taunt Yuuri into another literary discussion that almost always devolved into shameless flirting. Yuuri did his best to act as though Viktor distracting him from his very important job was annoying. He was, as it turned out, a horrible actor.

Viktor made no further progress on his newest novel and the last call from Yakov still remained unreturned, but he couldn't find it in him to care.

(He ignored Yuri's pointed looks or questions that always were about 'the end' no matter how they were phrased.)

"Phichit wants to meet you," Yuuri blurted out one day during an impromptu ice cream date. Viktor had somehow convinced him into it despite it being winter. It was a safer bet than the ocean.

"I thought that deep conversation we shared late at night about Maccachin was our bonding moment," Viktor replied, desperately trying to stop a stray bit of ice cream from ruining his gloves. "Is he really that desperate for my wonderful company? I never took him as a needy man."

"He's friendly. What can I say?" Yuuri replied, shoulders shaking with laughter. "He figures it could be at the bookstore or something. You could even bring your cousin if you want. Yuri, right? That way it's even."

"He's not going to want to do it," Viktor said, watching in despair as more of his ice cream dripped dangerously close to his gloves. Maybe Yuuri had been right in getting a cup.

"Might as well try," Yuuri said, offering a smile that made Viktor think that he had too much faith in him. "He might surprise you."

Viktor huffed. It was a losing battle to argue, and one Viktor wasn't interested in fighting. "I'll do my best."

Yuri stared at the sign above the bookstore with the look of a man about to face death. “I don't want to do this.”

“I didn't want to have to babysit a moody teenager on my vacation,” replied Viktor, his voice never swaying from his usual overly cheerful tone for a second, “but we all have to make sacrifices for the people we care about.”

Yuri scoffed, “You? Caring about someone other than yourself? That'll be the day.”

Viktor glared at Yuri. “I know you communicate primarily through sass and edge, but I'm going to need you to tone that down. Just a little.”

“Don't want me to embarrass you in front of your muse?” Yuri asked. He threw a look over his shoulder as he pushed open the door to Yu-topia Akatsuki. Viktor grumbled under his breath, but said nothing as he followed Yuri into the bookstore.

A girl Viktor had never met before stood in Yuuri's place. She looked half-asleep and made no attempt to hide the magazine she was flipping through in place of actually working. Without looking up, she called, “He's in the backroom,” and jabbed a thumb towards a door behind her.

Viktor nodded even though the woman was too focused on her reading to pay attention to him. Before Yuri could barge into the room with little care for decency, Viktor grabbed a hold of his shoulder.

“What the-” Yuri hissed, trying to shrug the hand off his shoulder.

“I know you're excited,” Viktor said, “but please, calm down.”

Yuri, ever dramatic, growled and jerked out of Viktor's grasp. At the very least, he followed him as he walked to the door with a minimal amount of stomping.

As soon as Viktor opened the door, he was met with a sheepish Yuuri holding a pair of skates. “There's been a change of plans,” he said.

“Uh?” was Viktor's brilliant response.

A man, one that Viktor faintly remembered as the one who Yuuri had pointed as his friend, appeared from behind a stack of boxes. In his hands were another pair of skates. Viktor might not have been the most observant of people, but he could guess what this meant even before Phichit announced it. With a smile more malicious than had any right to be on that face, Phichit announced, “We're going skating.”

Viktor felt faint. Yuri looked on the verge of hysteric laughter.

“Sorry about that,” said Yuuri on their way to the ice rink. Viktor blinked back the embarrassing memories of his previous attempts at skating and plastered on a smile he hoped

was convincing. “I really should have said something beforehand.”

Viktor shrugged. “No problem, it’s not too big of a deal.”

Yuuri gave him a strange look. Viktor had to admit that his excuse fell flat when the person he was telling it too had seen him go pale at the mention of ice skating. He didn’t want to elaborate on why he seemed so adverse to ice skating –Yuuri would soon see it for himself– so he said, “So, why have we changed plans?”

“It was Phichit’s idea,” Yuuri said. “He’s a skater and has been dying to use Yuuko’s rink. He thought we could kill two birds with one stone this way.”

“And you went along with it?” Viktor asked, glancing over at the enthusiastic Phichit. Yuri was walking awkwardly in between the three of them, unwilling to be seen next to Viktor and not wanting to risk conversation with Phichit.

“He’s convincing,” Yuuri replied,

“If I didn’t know better,” Viktor said, “I’d say that I should be worried.”

Yuuri rolled his eyes and elbowed Viktor’s side. “Good thing you do know better.”

A sharp whistle and a call of, “Calm down!” brought Viktor’s attention to a young woman and the gremlin children she seemed to be unsuccessfully attempting to herd back into a building. When she caught sight of the four of them, she smiled and waved.

Yuuri waved back and jogged up to meet her. “Yuuko,” he said, returning her grin.

The woman’s eyes scanned the group before the finally settled on Viktor. In a voice that wanted to be a whisper she said, “Is that him?”

Yuuri blinked, before saying, “Is this why you wanted to go ice skating, Phichit?”

With a gasp befitting of a movie star, Phichit replied, “I would- How dare you imply-”

“He called last night to book the rink for a couple hours,” one of the children said.

“Traitor,” said Yuuko and Phichit. The girl smiled up at them.

Shaking her head in exasperation, Yuuko said, “Well enough about nefarious plans. Let’s get to ice skating.” She turned to Yuri and Viktor. “Do you need help picking out your skates?”

Yuri shook his head, eyes trained on his feet. “I’m good.”

Viktor, more willing to admit his lack of knowledge, nodded yes.

Yuuko clapped her hands together and with a bit more ease, herded the children and the rest of the group into the building. Phichit, Yuuri, and the girls headed for the ice while Yuuko dragged Viktor and Yuri to the skates.

It was halfway through Yuuko helping Viktor find his size that they heard, “What the fuck?”

Yuuko, looking worried, excused herself and headed over to the grumpy teenager. Viktor chuckled and continued to search on his own for his size. He could hear snatches of conversation the boiled down to, “You didn’t realize the Japanese measure shoe sizes differently.”

Eventually Yuuko returned. Yuri was by her side, wearing a pair of ice skates that he kept glaring at. Under his breath he muttered about how dumb Japan’s shoe sizes were.

“You find everything alright?” Yuuko said. Viktor nodded, and gestured to his own skates. “Alright, then follow me.”

When he entered the room, he noticed it was empty except the eight of them. Phichit was the only one on the ice, dancing to some music only he could hear. The girls and Yuuri were leaned against the railing watching with rapt attention as Phichit attempted a quad. He flubbed, but his group of onlookers still cheered.

“I can do better than that,” Yuri grumbled, and stomped over to the entrance.

Yuuri apparently noticing their entrance, looked over his shoulder and waved. “Got everything settled?”

“Ah,” Viktor replied, eyeing Yuri as he slid out onto the ice. He took a free spot leaning against the railing next to Yuuri and continued, “Mostly. Yuri had issues with your shoe sizes.”

Yuuri snorted and muttered, “That’s going to get confusing quick.”

“Maybe you shouldn’t steal names,” said Yuri, who’d overheard the conversation as he skated by. “Then we’d be fine.”

Yuuri’s eyebrow arched and he looked over at Viktor as if to ask how on earth that boy could ever be considered cute.

“I told him that as the older one, it was technically your name first, but he just wouldn’t have it,” Viktor replied.

“Well,” Yuuri said, pushing himself away from the railing and turning towards Viktor, “we can figure out something to differentiate us later. For now, we skate.”

The sick feeling Viktor had before came back full force. “I’m not very good,” Viktor stammered out, “like at all.”

Yuuri, taking no pity on poor Viktor, took him by the hands and pulled him towards the rink. He seemed to be holding back laughter as he said, “For someone who defended ten pages of ice skating exposition, you sure aren’t excited to actually do it.”

Viktor did not whine when he said, “There’s a difference between enjoying a sport and actually doing it, Yuuri.”

“It’ll be fun,” Yuuri said, “I promise.”

“Maybe for you,” Viktor muttered, but followed along as Yuuri pulled him onto the ice.

Chapter End Notes

My emotional state can be summed up in one word: bleh. I'll probably take bit longer to reply to any questions/comments, so sorry.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Sorry, sorry.

Viktor was beginning to think that he could get used to this. There was something to be said about the ice. It was comforting if only in a cold, slightly *damp* way. It kind of reminded him of the snowy days when he'd play until his fingers were numb from the freezing weather.

He could do without Yuri threatening to skate over his fingers though.

"Idiot," called the devil child from where he was squatted next to Viktor, "get off the ice."

"It's for skating, not for napping," sang Phichit. Damn Phichit. If he wanted Viktor to like him, he would take his side. At this rate, Viktor would have to force himself not to like Phichit, a feat he was quickly learning was nearly impossible.

Before the teasing could get worse, Yuuri, his knight in shining armor, skated over and offered him a hand up. Viktor took it and, with his free hand, brushed himself off. When he looked up at his savior, Yuuri had a fond but slightly bewildered expression on his face. "You really are bad at skating, aren't you?"

"You thought I was lying?" Viktor replied. He wobbled a bit and was thankful when Yuuri reached out to steady him. He was at no risk of falling, but found himself placing his hand against Yuuri's shoulder.

Yuuri shrugged, sending Viktor wobbling a bit. "I thought you were exaggerating."

"Me?" Viktor said, clutching a hand to his chest, "Exaggerate? Why, I never!"

Yuuri snorted and shook his head. "Would you like some help learning? I'm not the best of teachers, but Yuuko-

"I'd love to learn from you, Yuuri," Viktor said, stressing the 'you'. Viktor smiled, one of those blinding ones that charmed most who saw it. He even threw a wink in for extra measure.

"Are you sure?" Yuuri asked, frowning in confusion at Viktor. He didn't look charmed, but he didn't look like he was going to deny Viktor's request either. Viktor would call it a win.

“I have never been surer of anything else,” he replied.

“I’m not a good teacher,” Yuuri muttered, more to himself than Viktor.

“And I’ve been told I’m a troublesome student,” Viktor said, “maybe we can cancel each other out.”

He leaned towards Yuuri, only to quickly regret it when it his skates slipped out from under him. He might have fallen if it weren’t for Yuuri’s grip around his waist. This had the not-unwelcomeside-effect of pushing them closer together. He was close enough that as Yuuri mumbled, “That doesn’t sound right,” Viktor found his attention rooted solely on Yuuri’s lips.

Despite himself, Viktor felt his cheeks warm.

Yuuri had honestly thought Viktor was acting. A few people had pulled the same trick before; not on him of course, but on his friends. He’d always laughed at their efforts and wondered what exactly they got out of making a fool of themselves. If Viktor was acting, he was either dedicated to the role or a masochist.

“This isn’t helping your skating,” Yuuri sighed, trying to push the growth attached to his shoulder off.

“I’m tired,” moaned the growth, peaking up at him from behind his bangs. The grip around his arm tightened in response to the shoving. “I don’t want to do this anymore.”

“We’ve been at it for less than thirty minutes, Viktor,” Yuuri replied. “I thought you wanted to learn.”

“That was before I realized how hopelessly impossible it is for me to learn how to skate,” Viktor said. He let go of Yuuri’s arm and stumbled his way to the exit. Yuuri wanted to compliment him on managing the distance without tripping, but Viktor did not look like he’d appreciate it. “I’ll watch from the sidelines, thank you. Something tells me that it’ll be funnier to watch those two-” he gestured to where Phichit and Yuri seemed to be gearing up to a competition “-off the battlefield.”

Now Yuuri just felt bad. “I’ll join you,” Yuuri said, skating towards the exit as well. He couldn’t just let Viktor sit alone on the sidelines.

“Oh no, don’t let my incompetence hold you back,” Viktor said, grip tight against the edge of the rink.

“It’s fine,” Yuuri replied. He glanced back towards the two skaters. While Phichit seemed to be amused by the whole thing, Yuri looked like he was ready to draw blood. “I don’t particularly want to be on the ice with your cousin right now.”

Viktor nodded, expression grim, and ushered Yuuri off the ice. As they made their way towards the benches, Yuuko took notice and joined up with them.

“Tired?” She asked.

“You could say that,” Yuuri replied, offering a weak smile towards Yuuko.

“We’re taking shelter from the war,” Viktor said, pointing towards Phichit and Yuri. Yuuko’s children had taken notice of the competition as well and were huddled in a corner close by, their phones pointed towards the skaters.

Yuuko took one look at them before calling out, “Girls, get off the ice.”

They ignored her, and began to argue the best angle to shoot the impromptu competition. Yuuko shook her head and with a muttered apology, ran off to the side of the rink that was closer to the girls. The two of them watched her for a moment, before Yuuri spoke up.

“Sorry about this,” he said, gesturing towards the ice rink. “I thought you’d like it given how vehemently you defended ice skating in our discussion of *Stammi Vicino*.”

Viktor leaned back. His expression was blank, and Yuuri could glean nothing from it. “It’s not like I hate it or anything. I’m actually a fan. I just never really could bring myself to learn. I always felt so busy, you know?” His expression softened and his voice was fond as he continued, “So, I just kind of hung out around the ice rinks and watched the skaters. Lived vicariously through them. It was where I-” he stopped, a suddenly nervous expression appearing on his face. The next words he spoke were so clumsily tacked on that it was a wonder Viktor thought he wouldn’t question them, “spent a lot of time as a child.”

Yuuri frowned but did not probe further. He filed it away in the back of his mind, along with all the other small oddities he’d noticed about Viktor. There was a time to think about those, but this was not one of them. “Must have been nice,” he said instead.

Viktor hummed, mind already moved on from the conversation of before. Instead, he looped his arm around Yuuri’s, pulled him closer, and began to dramatically narrate the competition before them.

Yuuri laughed, and ignored the part of his mind that wondered just what Viktor was hiding.

End Notes

If you want to bug me, I'm [here](#). I'm a lonely human. I won't mind.

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