

Little Bit Wiser

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Little Bit Wiser

by [dabforpalermo](#)

Summary

Shane Hollander has four issues right now. Two of them are found tucked behind his back molars, the third is his crippling fear of dentists, and the fourth is a husband who doesn't seem to care that he'd rather die than step foot in an orthodontist's office.

Notes

Is it really a dabforpalermo fic without an injury trope?! No!!!!
General TW for some gross descriptions of teeth and infection.

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

The ring of the buzzer sounding is enough to send Shane's jaw into protest, his mouth clamping like a vice against the plastic mouthguard that's dangling from his two front teeth. He hisses as it vibrates his sensitive skin, barely having time to react before he's getting thrown in the celebration pile, jostled and knocked and patted on every inch of his body.

He smiles, because although the sharp tug in his jaw makes him want to wire his mouth shut permanently, he scored the winning goal. A minute and a half left in the third, the scoreboard tied 3-3, and Hollander takes it home with a slapshot from the defense line, landing in the unprotected top right corner of the net.

Ilya is somewhere to his left, he can hear the deep reverb of his voice as he celebrates on the ice, and though Shane is the least expected person to exhibit PDA, he finds his body craving Ilya's strong arms wrapped around him, knowing that just a second with the man can ease any pain he's feeling. He waits until everybody else lines up to shake hands before using his ungloved hand to squeeze the back of Shane's neck, right along the neck guard.

"That was good goal. Lucky." He unhands him, patting him on the back, right in the middle of his jersey. He shoves Shane gently into the line, keeping enough distance between them to not cause discomfort, but staying close enough that Shane can feel his presence. He knows he gets overwhelmed quickly, especially when he's the centre of attention, a thing that stopped being so important to him as he grew out of his rookie status.

The cameras and journalists and fans seem to stress him out more than anything these days—always practicing at home, making sure his appearance is correct, planning out the phrases he's going to say before he's asked them. Luckily enough, post-game interviews are all the same, and it's easy enough to spout something similar each time. *We played a good game tonight*, he could say. *Lots of room for improvement, but this early on in the season, it's definitely a good omen.*

So, when he reaches the dressing room and is applauded by his team, he takes his helmet off, preparing to say something encouraging and boast about his goal a little. Instead, he opens his mouth to talk, and can't get a word out.

He tries again, mouth feeling like it's full of marbles, and every inhale that reaches his throat burns his gums in a way that he's never felt before. He clears his throat, looking behind him, and finding Ilya's concerned eyes immediately.

“We played good,” Ilya takes over, hand resting on Shane’s shoulder. “But next week, we play better.”

The team seems to deem this acceptable, as they all begin their own side conversations, but Shane’s starting to feel the familiar wave of nausea settle in his gut, and he allows Ilya to drag him off into the shower room, both of them still fully dressed in their gear.

“Panic attack?” Ilya asks, ducking his head to make eye contact, and Shane can only shake his head. He doesn’t think this is a panic attack- he’s pretty well versed in those. Knows the tightening in his chest, the ringing in his ears, the way his vision blurs around the edges. He can breathe fine, he’s just... *aching*. “What is it?”

“M fine,” Shane forces out, teeth protesting. He stretches his jaw out a bit and shakes his head again. “Good. I’m good.”

Ilya doesn’t look like he believes him, but after this many years together, he knows when to push and when to let Shane cool off on his own. So, he brings Shane back to the main area, sitting him down and crouching in front of him, beginning to unlace his skates, ignoring the buzz that they seem to be attracting.

“Hey, if I score the winning goal next game, will Captain undress me?”

Ilya scoffs, pulling Shane’s left skate off and beginning to work on his right. “Score *any* goal first, then we talk.”

“Hollander, media wants you.”

“No.” Ilya looks up, eyes set on their coach. He shifts his weight from foot to foot, a confused look on his face.

“I told them you’d-“

“No.”

Shane bats Ilya away, taking his jersey off and standing. “It’s fine. I can do it.”

“Something is wrong.” Ilya grabs his wrist, squeezing him the way he often does when he wants to remind Shane of who’s in charge. “You do not have to.”

“I know I don’t,” Shane says, his voice tense. He pulls his hand away. “I can make my own decisions.”

A quiet *ooh* is heard throughout the dressing room as Shane makes his way over to his coach, leaving Ilya alone where they were standing.

The interview goes about as well as Shane expected. Pangs of pain shoot through his gums, and he keeps mumbling around certain words, the syllables blending together and slurring in front of the microphone. He brings a hand up to cup his jaw, trying to remain composed, but the pain just keeps getting worse as he forces himself to talk.

“Hollander, are you feeling alright?” A journalist asks- one whose face he recognizes, a friendly enough woman who always asks good questions. She’s not holding the mic to him, but asking him personally, and he tries his best to give a convincing smile.

“Great. Just tired,” he flirts with the camera, knowing what kind of response it gets. “I’m not a rookie anymore, so buzzer beaters take a lot out of me.”

“Get some rest, Shane. We’ll see you in Detroit.”

Coach walks him back after the interview, his eyes scanning over Shane’s frame. “You sure you’re alright, kid? Captain seemed like he was coming for my head.”

“He worries,” Shane dismisses, massaging his jaw. “I’m good. Gonna go home and sleep.”

True to his word, he gets undressed quickly, hopping in the shower after everyone has left. Well- *almost* everyone. Ilya is sitting in his spot, fully dressed, scrolling on his phone like he doesn’t even care if Shane is there or not. He grabs Shane’s bag for him on the way out, throwing it over his shoulder and unlocking the car, not a word from his mouth the whole drive home. Shane knows he’s in trouble.

“What will you eat?” Ilya asks once they get home, hanging Shane’s backpack up and beginning to walk to their kitchen. His back is tense, the muscles tight, and Shane knows he’s only worrying him more, but the idea of eating anything makes him want to puke.

“I’m just gonna go to bed,” Shane says, standing awkwardly in the doorway. Ilya shuts the fridge and turns to look at him.

“You will eat first.”

“I’m not hungry,” Shane mumbles, hand coming back up to his jaw. Ilya sighs quietly and makes his way over.

“You are hurt.” He takes his time looking Shane up and down, though usually, his gaze is clouded over with lust. Today, however, he only sees two things: worry and annoyance. “Show me.”

“I’m not hurt,” Shane whines, horrified as he finds himself close to tears. “I just need to go to bed.”

“Shane.”

“*Ilya.*”

He raises his eyebrows, clearly unamused by the childish tone of Shane's voice, and frowns. He takes a long moment before stepping toward him. "If you do not feel better by morning, I am taking you to doctor."

"Okay," Shane pouts, face flushed. He reaches out and grabs Ilya's hand, pulling it closer and hugging his bicep. "Can we go to bed?"

"I must eat first. I am not child who refuses to eat," Ilya teases, though his voice is soft. He presses a kiss to Shane's head and ruffles his hair. "Go lay down."

Shane stays there a moment longer, breathing in his scent, and reluctantly peels himself off, dragging his feet all the way to the bedroom. He steps into their ensuite bathroom, flicking the light on, and frowns at the swollen appearance of his cheeks, making him look similar to a chipmunk. He leans in close to the mirror, opening his mouth, and uses his finger to tug his lip aside. He searches for a moment before he finds the cause of his agony:

Two red, swollen lumps on his gums past his molars, with two sharp white edges sticking out.

His wisdom teeth.

He huffs, his breath fogging up the glass, and sticks his finger in his mouth, pressing down. The pain almost makes him scream. His gums throb, pulsing in his mouth, and he feels his eyes well up with tears at the intrusion. Shane removes his finger, washing his hands, and goes to lay in bed, grabbing his phone.

Do wisdom teeth go away on their own

Google shows no help, advising him to book an appointment with an oral surgeon immediately, but if there's one thing Shane fears more than losing the cup again, it's the dentist.

The taste of gloves in his mouth makes him gag, the sterile stench of a dental office causes his heart rate to shoot up, and he briefly wonders how many people live their lives with constant pain in their gums. He's tough- has a high pain tolerance and all, but this is quickly making him want to simultaneously cry and puke all at once.

When Ilya joins him in bed half an hour later, he keeps his eyes stuck on Shane as if he's examining him further, but decides not to push him any more. He pulls him into his chest, rubbing his back, and Shane thinks he can deal with any pain in the world as long as he can live here in his embrace.

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All good things must come to an end. This is the first thought Shane has when he wakes up alone, Ilya's side of the bed cold, and with more pain in his mouth than he's ever experienced before. He drags himself up, dizzy on his feet, and shuffles his way back to the bathroom, opening his mouth as wide as he can to examine.

Yep. Just as he predicted. They look even worse.

Now, instead of simply being red and inflamed, there's traces of pus and infection around the edges of the teeth that are sticking out. His cheeks are swollen, more so than last night, and anyone with vision can tell that he's struggling. He brushes his teeth as gently as he can, swishing around a glass of water in his mouth for some relief, trying not to cry with every waking second.

He washes his face and does his skincare, careful around his jaw and cheeks, and likes to think he looks a little better by the time he goes downstairs, joining his husband in the kitchen.

"Good morning," Ilya greets, sipping on coffee and scrolling on his phone. Shane gives a little hum in response and goes over to the fridge, trying to find a cold liquid that could relieve some of his pain. "How do you feel?"

“Fine,” Shane mumbles, but it sounds muffled and slurred. He finds a Gatorade in the back of the fridge and opens the bottle, holding the liquid in his mouth as long as possible before swallowing it down.

“We have to run errand later today,” Ilya says, pointedly not looking up at him. “I have items to pick up from store.”

“You go,” Shane whines. “I’ll stay here.”

Ilya finally peeks up, his eyes hardening on Shane. “No. We go together.”

So, against his wishes, Shane ends up in the passengers seat of their car at three pm, his mouth throbbing and pulsing hot waves of pain all the way down to his neck. His head is starting to pound, hurting from all the tension in his face, and he doesn’t realize his eyes have slipped shut until Ilya parks the car. Shane takes a deep breath and opens his eyes, ready to face the grocery store on a Sunday afternoon, but instead finds himself in front of-

“No.”

“This is not question,” Ilya says, stepping out of the car. He opens Shane’s door and crosses his arms. “Let’s go.”

“No.”

“You are hurt. You keep grabbing your jaw. I look in your mouth after you fall asleep last night-“

“That’s an invasion of privacy!” Shane exclaims, the yelling only making him hurt more.

“It is my mouth to look at,” Ilya brushes him off. “I see bad tooth growing in. I call doctor on team, he calls orthodontist. They have appointment to get rid of teeth today.”

Shane shakes his head, remaining buckled up in the car. “I’m not going in.”

“Is not up to you.”

“Ilya,” he begs, swatting at his hands as he bends down to unbuckle his seatbelt, finding himself too weak to truly fight back. “Hey, hey, hey, stop,” he begs, gripping Ilya’s sweater tightly as the other man grabs under his armpits, ready to haul him out of the car, scrambling to find a way out. “It’s fine. It’s okay. These- these things happen all the time in Canada. You don’t need surgery for them.”

“Do not lie,” Ilya says, grasping him with even more strength and tugging him out of the car. He gets Shane standing on two feet and closes the door, locking it before Shane tries to get back in. “Either you walk in like adult, or I carry you like child.”

“You won’t-“ Shane squeaks as Ilya reaches down, tossing him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes and beginning to walk into the office. Shane beats on his back, trying to squirm around, but a firm pinch to the back of his thigh has him settling down.

“Hello. I have appointment for my parasite.”

Ilya puts him back down on the ground, immediately grasping both of his wrists in one hand and putting him in a hold, shushing his complaints half heartedly as he discusses things with the receptionist. Shane looks around, trying to find an alliance, but everyone seems to be purposely avoiding his gaze.

“I don’t consent,” Shane says, tugging at his hands to try and free them. Ilya only tightens his grip. “You can’t- can’t take them out if I don’t consent.”

The receptionist looks at him with pity, as if he’s a child having a tantrum. “If you aren’t found in reasonable condition, your husband is able to give consent for the procedure.”

“What the hell does *reasonable condition* mean?!”

“Shane,” Ilya warns, voice deep. “You will get them out. You will be fine. I will be right here.”

“I’m not doing it,” Shane argues, hot tears streaming down his face. He tries to wipe them away but Ilya isn’t letting go of him. He has a staring contest with Ilya, who, though his words are tense and his face is concerned, is looking back at him with softness, as if he truly understands how scared he is and is going to be there with him anyway. Shane snuffles wetly and takes a breath, accepting defeat by stopping his struggling and looking down at the floor.

“Good,” Ilya praises quietly. He loosens his grip slightly and turns back to the receptionist, finishing up the paperwork before he brings Shane over to the waiting room. He watches him carefully- his bouncing legs, the way his eyes are shooting all over the room every time there’s a creak or a noise, the beginnings of a panic attack that he knows like the back of his hand. He rests his palm on Shane’s shaking knee and squeezes. “Look. You’re on.”

Shane’s eyes dart up to the TV, where the highlights from last night’s game are playing, showing his winning goal from multiple angles.

“Tell me what you could have done better,” Ilya speaks from beside him. Shane takes a shuddering breath and nods.

“I- uh, I dragged my feet too much. I didn’t even check to see if I was offside. I- the- uh, it was risky, to- uh, to shoot from defense. I could have given them the puck to turn the play around with.”

Ilya nods, watching as he calms himself down slightly. “Good.” He continues this game as the highlights switch to a different team, asking Shane for pointers.

“He dropped his stick too early, lost all momentum he was building up,” Shane comments, leaning back against the chair and up against Ilya’s side. His leg has stopped bouncing. “Could’ve avoided that icing if he checked and saw that right wing was open.”

“He is like you were,” Ilya says, watching the rookie they’re critiquing. “Too eager to please.”

“Mr. Hollander?”

Shane freezes, all the tension coming back in his body. Ilya stands, sticking his hand out. He could easily drag Shane in again, literally kicking and screaming, but Shane knows what he wants- he wants him to be the one to make the decision to go in.

After a long moment, Shane sighs and reaches up for Ilya, his hand trembling until the other man holds it tightly. They follow the surgeon into an operation room, the scent making Shane’s breath pick up and his vision start to blur.

“Hey.” Ilya stops, his free hand coming up to rest along Shane’s aching jaw. “Look at me.”

Shane’s eyes are darting all over the place, seeing the medical equipment laying out, the scalpel, the needles, the people in the room rushing around to get everything set up. Ilya drags his gaze back to him.

“Just at me. Nothing else,” Ilya says softly. “You will be okay.”

Shane snuffles, nodding a couple times. Ilya tuts.

“Say it.”

“I’ll be- I’ll be okay.” He allows Ilya to walk him over to the chair, sitting down like he’s awaiting execution, and wrings his fingers out in his lap. The surgeon is friendly, a woman whose smile can be seen through her mask, and she takes a moment to sit at Shane’s side.

“We will be putting you under fully, so you don’t have to sit through this awake,” she explains. “Your husband told us that you have quite a phobia of the dentist, so we are allowing him to stay in the room with you until you’re unconscious. Then, we’ll take you down to recovery, and he can be there as soon as you wake up.”

Shane looks up at Ilya, who gives him a gentle, encouraging smile, and nods back at the surgeon.

“Okay. We’re gonna put the mask on and insert an IV, then it’s smooth sailing from there. We will take all four teeth out so you don’t have to worry about this again in the future.”

Before Shane can comprehend it, a mask is put over his nose and mouth, a sweet, candy like smell filling his senses. The anesthesiologist inserts the needle into his hand, and he uses the free one to scramble near Ilya, trying to find him in his panic.

Ilya interlaces their fingers together, rubbing his thumb over his knuckles and beginning to speak to him. Shane can’t make out the words, his ears ringing far too much, but the gentle hum of Ilya’s voice drives him to calmness.

“Count down from ten, Mr. Hollander.”

He’s asleep before he hits 6.

-

Ilya’s leg bounces as he sits in the waiting room, checking the clock for the umpteenth time. It’s only been an hour, but every moment he spends in this pristine room is another moment he spends worrying about Shane.

It’s hard to be the bad guy. Shane had all but offered himself to Ilya on a silver platter all those years ago, telling him how sometimes he needs Ilya to take over, to make him do things

even if he doesn't want to. Usually, this mindset is reserved for sexual endeavors, but when it comes to Shane's health, he can't mess around.

Still. It's difficult to look into his doe eyes, teary and red-trimmed and filled with defeat-*betrayal*. But Shane would sit and wait for his teeth to rot in his mouth before taking himself to get checked out, and Ilya has to put his foot down sometimes.

He's online, looking at wisdom teeth aftercare tips, when the surgeon from earlier comes out to greet him.

"He is okay?" Ilya asks, hating the way his voice cracks. It's a simple procedure- no room for mishaps. Still, until he has eyes on his boy, he won't settle.

"He is doing great. All four teeth came out easily, we are starting him on antibiotics to get rid of the infection around the gums, and he's currently awake and asking for you."

Ilya follows her down to the recovery room, sighing in relief at the sight of Shane- cheeks chubby, eyes glazed, and mouth packed with bloody gauze- but it's Shane. His eyes brighten up when he spots Ilya, and he frantically waves him over.

"Ilya!" He calls, though with the gauze, he can barely make out the word. Ilya slides next to him on the chair and squeezes his shoulder, leaning down to take a deep breath in his hair, pressing a kiss to his scalp.

"Hi, sweetheart," Ilya says softly. Shane giggles and links their fingers together. The surgeon comes back and removes the gauze in his mouth, having him open wide to check on the cauterization, and smiles gently at him.

"They took my teeth," Shane lisps, his tongue heavy and hanging out of his mouth. A drop of blood falls from the corner of his lips, and Ilya doesn't even hesitate before wiping it with his thumb.

“I know,” Ilya responds. “Bad teeth.”

“Hah. *Bad teeth*,” Shane mocks his accent, his posture straight. He giggles again, then proceeds to burst out laughing, doubling over in the chair.

“I am glad you think you are so funny,” Ilya says dryly, though he’s amused by the display. Seeing Shane so childlike, so happy, is something he doesn’t get to do often.

The surgeon goes over some tips that Ilya has already read up on, handing him a bag with more gauze and mouthwash and sending them on their way. Ilya keeps a strong arm wrapped around (a still laughing) Shane’s waist, keeping him upright on the way out to the car. As soon as they exit the building, Shane’s laughter stops, and Ilya doesn’t even have time to prepare before he’s bursting out in loud, dramatic sobs.

“Oh god,” Ilya groans, watching as Shane makes a complete mess of himself, blood dripping down his chin and tears and snot falling from his face. “What is the matter? You are okay, da?”

Shane sucks in a shaky breath, his tears only coming faster, and Ilya quickly deposits him down on the bench outside, kneeling in front of him and grabbing his hands.

“Do they hurt, sweetheart?”

“No-“ Shane sobs, bringing his hands up to cover his face. “*No*. You’re- you’re so good to me. I love you so- so much.”

Ilya sighs in relief, rolling his eyes and reaching up to pull Shane’s hands away from his face. “Yes. I love you too. You are dramatic.”

“Nobody’s ever loved me like you,” Shane wails, the words still slurred and clunky coming out of his mouth. “You’re too good for this earth. I don’t deserve you.”

“Shane,” Ilya sighs, grabbing a tissue from the bag and wiping his face. “You are making mess. Come on, we go home.”

“I want to- to marry you,” Shane cries, his gross hands cupping Ilya’s face.

“You already did,” Ilya says, ducking his head to press a kiss into said gross hand. He helps Shane stand up again and gets him in the car, buckling up his seatbelt and pulling his sweater tighter over him, hoping he’s not cold.

The drive home is fast- well, as fast as it can be, with Shane attempting to hop the seat and climb onto his lap every three seconds. He’s still crying, still blubbing all over himself about how much he loves Ilya, and honestly, the Russian is regretting not filming this for blackmail. Once they’re home, Ilya tries to get Shane up to bed, but he only cries harder, insisting on sitting on the couch with Ilya.

“You are so bossy,” Ilya says, sitting down and grunting when Shane straddles him, his entire body weight pressing into him. He presses his face into the crook of Ilya’s neck, and he can’t tell if the wetness is blood, snot, tears, or a combination. When he pulls back and Shane’s mouth is still bleeding, he reaches for the pack of gauze. “Open.”

“Huh?” Shane slurs, eyes half lidded.

“Open mouth.”

“M I sucking your dick?” Shane asks, and for some god awful reason, he doesn’t sound opposed to it in his state.

Ilya doesn’t even answer, just holds his mouth open and carefully shoves the gauze inside, watching as Shane’s oral fixation kicks in and he happily suckles on it. He wipes his neck- it was a combination- and pulls Shane back in to snuggle.

“You did so good today,” Ilya says quietly, rubbing his fingers up and down Shane’s spine.
“Next time, I will not carry you like baby.”

Shane mumbles something that sounds an awful lot like *yes you will* into his chest, letting sleep take over, and Ilya decides that yes, he will continue to carry Shane like a baby anywhere he has to, because he is his baby, and Ilya would do just about anything to keep him safe.

End Notes

I'm still sick, but finally starting to feel a bit better. You guys can probably tell I'm in the midst of horrible exams season because I am pumping out these fics that I wrote in one sitting (instead of studying). Sometimes I wish I had a soft dom like Ilya to make me study for my exams even though I don't want to. Sigh.

Please let me know what you think! Thank you for so much love and support in my last HR fic, it genuinely blew me away how kind and supportive this fandom is. Let me know if there's any fics you'd like to see with these two, or just let me know what you're having for dinner tonight lol

Love yall!!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!