

simple comforts

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simple comforts

by [last_honey](#)

Summary

Press conferences are easy. Shane could do them in his sleep. Right now, however, his body feels like it's being suffocated by tight plastic wrap and his brain is already numb from overstimulation, and it's taking everything in him not to lose his shit.

[Or, in September 2015, Shane gets overstimulated during a press conference, and Ilya brings him back.]

Notes

Hi guys! I want to preface this by saying I have based Shane's experiences with autism on my own. While he does not outright refer to his neurodivergency as "autism" here, he does explicitly talk about being overstimulated and explains what it means for himself. While this fic does go into a gray area between the books and the TV show, I relate very heavily to Hudson Williams's portrayal of Shane in the show and how he has let Shane's autism inform his performance. I also just love that Shane, like myself, is a half Asian legend (I'm kidding, but also not?). Today, I bring you a fic about Shane's autism. Maybe another day I will bring you one about him being wasian. For now, thank you for reading! I hope you enjoy.

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

September, 2015

It's standard procedure:

A press conference before the start of the season. It's been four years since Shane and Rozanov have done one side-by-side with just each other, though, but it's been long enough to where people will think they'll have something new and interesting to say. Even though there really isn't any reason for them to be talking together. Even if they don't have as much of that on-camera animosity that they used to—the people still eat it up. Fucking vultures.

Or, at least, it *should* be standard procedure, except when Shane wakes up bright and early to start getting ready, he immediately knows something is off. It happens sometimes, usually after a long stretch of activity, but all he's done this week is fly to Boston and visit Rozanov's penthouse last night. They'd had fun, like they always do: Shane's cheek pressed into the mattress while Rozanov's chest pressed into his back, holding him down, clearing his brain of everything except Rozanov and the feeling of Rozanov's dick buried deep in his ass. Shane still feels the ghost of Rozanov's lips on the top of his spine, soft and biting at the same time. Rozanov's been sweet with him lately, apparently in a good mood—not that Shane minds the alternative. Quite the opposite, really. But there's something that settles low and deep in Shane's gut whenever he thinks about Rozanov holding him like he means something, fucking him like they'll go on forever.

Shane kind of wishes they would.

That's not important right now.

Right now, Mom is hovering over his shoulder while he's trying desperately to run through his practice questions, and his father is sitting at the desk and talking about *something* about the game in Florida next month, and Shane feels like he's going to throw up. He has to excuse himself to go to the bathroom and brush his teeth, if only so he can have a single moment of peace with just his toothbrush and phone for company.

He and Rozanov have been texting periodically since last night, joking about the shit they won't be able to talk about at the conference today. Shane's brushing his teeth when he remembers the last time they were here, over four years ago, their feet knocking beneath the table. He smiles around the toothbrush and has to spit to avoid choking.

"What's the matter?" Mom asks, poking her head into the doorway.

"Nothing," Shane says stiffly, the fluttery feeling in his chest dying like a bird shot midair.

He glances at his phone for one last shot at reprieve.

Lily: Looking forward to seeing you. Will be fun.

Despite the ache in his chest, Shane smiles.

It *will* be fun, he tells himself firmly. He's going to go downstairs and do a press conference with the man who'd sucked his dick last night and he's going to be so casual about it. He's going to get through it in one piece and it will be amazing.

It will.

"Hollander!"

Rozanov sounds fucking overjoyed to see him, arms spread out all wide and celebratory. A cocky grin splits his face and Shane sort of wants to kiss it off him.

"Good to see you again," Shane says as normally as he can, ignoring the hug and forcing Rozanov to settle for a handshake, as much as he just wants to sink into Rozanov's arms and let the weight of them rub away the tension in his chest. Rozanov rolls his eyes, but there's nothing malicious there. Just that good old fashioned sarcasm that he's known and loved for. The sight of it makes Shane feel almost unbearably fond of him.

"You guys are on in fifteen," someone says, and Shane nods as if he's listening. All he can see is Rozanov's stupid face and all he can hear is the buzz from the other side of the curtains. Press conferences are easy. Shane could do them in his sleep. But right now, his body feels like it's being suffocated by tight plastic wrap and his brain is already numb from overstimulation (*that's what it is*, he thinks faintly, wondering why he didn't realize it before) and it's taking everything in him not to fucking lose his shit.

Funnily enough, it feels like Rozanov's close presence is the only thing anchoring him. Shane inhales and catches a whiff of Rozanov's cologne, woody and fresh at the same time, and it grounds him instantly.

Rozanov meets Shane's eyes. His brows furrow, blue eyes sharp. He doesn't say anything until they're left alone, though. The second it happens, he says, "Are you okay?"

Shane forces himself to nod, even though he's not, and this entire day is going to test the absolute last of his patience.

Rozanov, damn him for being observational, looks skeptical, but he must understand something is off because all he whispers is, "Do you want me to come to your hotel room tonight?"

Shane swallows the lump in his throat. They rarely spend more than one night together anytime they see each other. Shit, they've never even spent the night together. But, if the opportunity presents itself, and if Rozanov is offering, and if Shane thinks it'll maybe be the least shitty part of how today will go...

"1324," Shane says, just as quietly, and Rozanov nods, satisfaction etched in the sharp lines of his face.

There isn't much they can say or do right now, especially with how many people are nearby, but it doesn't stop Shane from reaching and wrapping his hand around Rozanov's wrist, fingers pressing into his pulse. Rozanov sucks in a breath and, despite everything he's feeling right now, delight bolts through Shane at the sound. They've been at this for years and it's still incredible that *Shane* makes him like this. He's pretty sure the feeling will never go away. He pulls back when people start showing up.

A stylist comes by and double-checks that they look presentable, and then they're off to the races. Immediately, cameras start flashing, and Shane's heart stops.

It fucking stops. His face goes numb. The noise rushes over him like a wave, threatening to yank him away from shore, and he wonders if he's actually going to pass out this time.

Something hits his shoulder.

It takes him a second to realize it's Rozanov's hand. Rozanov, who is leaning into him like he's playing it up for cameras, like he's forcing Shane to be here instead of being the only thing keeping Shane's head above the waves. Shane sucks in a breath and plasters a smile onto his face and hopes it looks convincing enough.

"Thank you, thank you!" Rozanov shouts, squeezing Shane's shoulder with what might be all of his strength. "Is enough! Thank you."

The crowd laughs, and the noise dulls slightly, subdued by Rozanov's endless charm. Shane tries not to show how grateful he is, but he still knocks his knee against Rozanov's under the table when they're both seated. It all feels painfully familiar, reminiscent of the last time they did this all those years ago. Except this time, Shane feels like he's going to throw up if anyone so much as speaks to him.

So, of course, the first question is directed at him.

"Shane, how do you feel going into this new season?" the faceless reporter asks. A lowball question, soft enough to get them started.

The words feel like chewed-up gum as he forces them out of his throat. "I—Well. I feel good. I feel...good about where our team is."

"Do you think you'll be able to carry it all the way to the playoffs?" the same reporter asks.

Shane is saved when Rozanov snarks, "Not if I can help it."

There's laughter, and Shane actually feels himself smile genuinely at that. Trust Rozanov to work a room like he's been doing it his whole life. Knowing the guy, he probably has.

"Ilya, let's turn to you for a second," another reporter says. "You and Shane have been in the league for a few years now. You've played against each other many times. Have your feelings towards each other changed at all since the beginning?"

At that, Shane has to bite back an actual laugh. It's not his question to answer, nor does he feel like airing out all of their business for the whole world to hear.

Rozanov, predictably, has the perfect response for this one too. He leans closer to the mic just as his hand lands on Shane's thigh under the table, fingers digging in deliciously, the movement completely hidden by the patterned tablecloth. "Well, I think he has become a better player. Not as good as me, of course, but better."

Shane laughs, shaking his head. "Nah, you're so full of it."

More laughter, and some of the pain in Shane's chest eases. It doesn't go away, but it eases. Rozanov's hand is warm on his thigh, large and strong and grounding. Almost subconsciously, Shane finds his hand squeezing around Rozanov's. Rozanov doesn't move—he just continues like normal, answering questions as easily as he can. His English really has improved; he's barely hesitating at all when he speaks.

Despite the fact that his head still feels like it's going to explode, Shane finds that Rozanov is giving him the strength to answer his own questions and give into the bait that the reporters think they're clever for dangling in front of them: Opportunities for them to rag on each other. Rozanov's sarcasm is so cheery it almost hurts to listen to. Shane clings to it like a lifeline.

By the time they're released, he's exhausted, completely drained, and his brain is still struggling to keep up with everything. All he wants to do is go back to his room and sleep.

But, shit, Mom will be there. Shane loves his mother to death but if he has to listen to her at all right now—

"You need quiet?" Rozanov mutters.

"Please," Shane says.

And then Rozanov is dragging him off to the green room with some weak excuse that goes completely through one of Shane's ears and out the other, and before Shane knows it, they're completely alone.

"Are you alri—?" Rozanov gets cut off by Shane leaning against the nearest wall and sliding down it, his body a crumpled heap on the floor. "What the fuck, Hollander?"

Shane doesn't respond—*can't* respond, because his lungs are too busy trying to force air back into them. Every inhale scrapes his throat raw. His eyes burn. If he didn't know better, he'd think it was a heart attack.

It's not.

He kinda wishes it was. Maybe it would feel less bad.

"Hollander," Rozanov says, but his voice sounds like it's underwater. Is Shane underwater? "Hollander, what happened?"

"I—" Shane digs the heel of his hand into his eye. The dull pain feels good. Like a wake-up. "Sorry."

“Do not apologize,” Rozanov says, and fuck, he’s being *gentle* right now. “Are you okay?”

Shane, miraculously, manages to nod, even if he doesn’t feel okay right this second. “I will be.”

“What would help?” Rozanov asks.

Using his free hand, Shane pats the space on the floor next to him. “Sit. Sit.”

Rozanov listens, pressing the entire folded-up length of his body to Shane’s. The contact is soothing, and it only gets better when Rozanov says, “Can I touch?”

“*Please*,” Shane says, and tries to ignore how much it sounds like he’s begging.

Rozanov’s hand goes to his thigh, squeezing softly. It’s a moment of clarity, a breath of fresh air. Shane’s head comes up from under the water. It’s so tender that it hurts. It feels so fucking good to have Rozanov with him right now, not a single camera in sight. For a moment, Shane can almost forget that this isn’t what they *do*. They aren’t friends. They don’t meet up more than once a trip. They don’t sit side-by-side on the floor of a green room after a press conference. Shane doesn’t get overstimulated in front of Rozanov. Rozanov doesn’t offer to help him through it.

But here they are: Shane’s head listing dangerously in the direction of Rozanov’s shoulder, Rozanov’s hand rubbing Shane’s thigh in soothing motions, their bodies so close together they might as well be one.

It’s all aggressively unfamiliar. Given the circumstances, Shane couldn’t be happier.

He’s already feeling better. His head is less loud, lungs less strained. His heart is beating at a normal human rhythm. When he comes further to, he realizes the rise and fall of his chest matches Rozanov’s.

He doesn’t think about what that means.

After a few minutes pass, Shane’s phone dings. He fishes it out of his pocket.

Mom: Where are you? The conference ended fifteen minutes ago.

Fifteen minutes? *Shit.*

“I gotta go,” Shane mumbles, even though everything in his body is telling him to stay.

Rozanov tilts his head. “What happened to you?”

There’s nothing accusatory there. If anything, Shane’s pretty sure he’s hearing concern.

“I get overstimulated,” Shane says quietly, head knocking back against the wall behind him. “Sometimes I get triggered by something, but sometimes I just wake up and my body is like...It can’t do it.”

“Ah.” Rozanov nods, then frowns. “Overstimulated?”

Must not be a word he’s learned yet. Shane can’t help but smile as he explains, “Everything feels like too much. Like, everything gets too loud or strong and my body can’t handle it. Even when people touch me—”

Rozanov immediately retracts his hand from Shane’s leg.

“No, no, you’re fine,” Shane says quickly, his hand darting out and grasping Rozanov’s before he even knows what he’s doing. “I wanted you to, remember? I—I like when you touch me.”

His cheeks go hot as Rozanov raises his brows. “Oh, I know,” Rozanov snarks, and Shane shakes his head.

“Not like that,” Shane says. Rozanov scoffs indignantly. “I mean, yes, *like that*, but also—your hand on my leg. Under the table. And now. It feels good.”

“Ah.” Rozanov looks down at their joined hands, and Shane wants to die a little bit inside (in a good way) when Rozanov moves them back to Shane’s legs, the gentle contact sending a pleasant thrill down Shane’s spine. “Like this? Is okay?”

“More than okay,” Shane promises, his voice just barely above a whisper.

His phone dings again and he groans, thunking his forehead onto Rozanov’s shoulder, who laughs.

“Is your mom?” Rozanov asks.

“Yeah.” Shane shuts his eyes and gives himself one more second before he stands. Rozanov moves with him, steadying him as he sways, hand on Shane’s waist. The position puts them eye-to-eye, their faces mere inches apart, and Shane holds his breath as Rozanov scans his face.

“You okay?” Rozanov asks.

“I am now,” Shane says, honestly. He’s not out of the woods yet, he knows, but...he’s better. He lets his forehead rest against Rozanov’s for a moment, and Rozanov squeezes his waist.

“I’ll come by later,” Rozanov says.

“I’ll be waiting,” Shane says.

Rozanov kisses him once, just a quick press of lips, and then he’s pushing Shane to the door. “You go first. They are waiting for you.”

Shane pauses with his hand on the door handle. He glances at Rozanov. “Thank you.”

“Don’t worry,” Rozanov says, some of his public-facing asshole-ness slipping back out. “I will not tell anyone.”

Shane snorts. “Yeah, thanks.”

Rozanov gives him a corny salute, and then Shane is off, head ducked to hide the grin that’s pulling at his lips. Last time they were here, a Rozanov-induced smile would’ve been the worst fucking thing in the world. This time, he’s glad to have it.

End Notes

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