

Still Waters

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Still Waters

by [TheQueenoftheAbyss](#)

Summary

“Ilya hasn’t been very well recently.” Shane swallowed, he hated saying that out loud, “Not for a long time actually.”

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Ilya's depression is flat, still and cold like water, sometimes he thinks it might drown him. The Hollanders are here to help him float.
(Or Ilya has a bad day, Yuna notices, and in the Hollander household love and support are given by force.)

Notes

!The Long Game/Episode 6 spoilers (sort of?)!

Hey guys! Happy Holidays everyone, I've got a touch of angst here but mostly a whole lot of fluff and love from the Hollander family! Slight trigger warning for mentions of Ilya's depression and descriptions of his feelings.

All of the speech in Italics is Ilya and Shane speaking Russian.

Everything here is based off of my own experiences with mental illness, Ilya might seem OOC at points but it can be common for people experiencing a depressive episode to flip-flop between emotions quickly and be a lot more teary/easily upset than normal so that's what were going off of.

As always take care of yourselves and reach out to others if you're struggling, this time of year can be difficult and I wish you all the best :) Enjoy!

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

One of the things Ilya hadn't anticipated on his long journey falling in love with Shane Hollander was the family that came with him. Ilya hadn't ever expected to have a family at this age, not like this. But Yuna and David had welcomed him into theirs with open arms, and it meant more to Ilya than he knew how to express.

Ilya and Shane tried to go to Yuna and David's at least once a week when they were staying at the cottage, mostly for dinner, and Ilya loved to spend time with them, loved seeing Shane happy in his childhood home alongside his family.

But today, as he sat on the end of his and Shane's bed watching his husband get ready for dinner, the thought of going over to his in-laws filled him with dread.

Shane, in his endless love and patience for Ilya's moods, had noticed. He wandered over to the bed, placing a hand gently in Ilya's curls to play with his hair. Ilya relaxed into the touch. "Ilya" Shane said quietly, bending down to press a kiss to his forehead, "if you're not feeling up to it we don't have to go tonight, Moya lyubov".

Ilya took a moment to focus on the slow movement of Shane's hands in his hair. He did want to go, he liked Yuna and David, he loved Yuna's cooking and he especially loved seeing his husband so happy and relaxed with them. The feeling of icy dread in his stomach had nothing to do with what he did or did not want to do with his evening. But that wasn't something Ilya knew how to explain, in English or in Russian, so he shook his head.

"No I do want to. I don't know how to explain how I'm feeling right now." He said quietly. He cast his eyes down to look at the floor, "I'm sorry". He hated feeling like he was letting Shane down, or getting in the way.

The small unsure sound of his husband's voice broke Shane's heart. "It's okay, you don't have to explain yourself. I just don't want you to put yourself through something you don't want right now." He said, still gently caressing Ilya's head.

If Shane could do anything to take away the pain he knew his husband felt he would, but he couldn't. All he could do was sit by, be there to catch Ilya when he fell, and to make his life as easy as possible.

"No, I want to go for dinner." Ilya asserted, lifting his head to press a soft kiss to his husband's lips, clinging to the warm feeling it brought him. "But maybe not like this," he said with a grin as he pulled back, "I don't want to cause a scandal getting into the car." As he said it he slid his hand up the back of Shane's leg, squeezing playfully at his ass.

Shane batted Ilya's hand away, a smile to match his Husband's creeping onto his face "None of that! We'll be late." Shane knew Ilya was putting on a playful tone for his benefit, and Ilya knew that Shane understood.

Shane turned around to their shared closet and opened the door, pulling out a pair of black jeans and one of Ilya's favourite sweaters. "Here" Shane said, taking the clothes off the hangar to pass to his husband. Ilya was reminded of the million reasons he loved Shane in

that moment, and the little bubble of love momentarily overtook the cold feeling of anticipation in his chest.

“I love you” he said quietly, in way of thanks. And Shane’s smile could have lit up all of Canada.

~

Somewhere between the soft warmth of their bedroom and the car, the dreadful feeling found its way back into Ilya’s chest. He took a deep breath as Shane locked the front door, closing his eyes momentarily to steel himself for this evening.

Ilya wanted nothing more than to climb back into bed, to hide under the warm covers and shut his brain off, shut the world out. But he knew that that would only make him worse, knew his thoughts would only spiral when he was alone. They always did.

The sound of the driver's door opening brought Ilya back into reality, and he turned to give his husband a small smile.

Shane returned it, but he couldn’t help the twist of sadness he felt seeing his husband so far from his normal self. “We don’t have to go, really. My parents won’t mind” Shane repeated, reaching over to place his hand on Ilya’s knee.

Ilya swallowed and shook his head, “No I should go, will be good for me.”

Shane nodded and reached to press the ignition on the car before stopping again. “You could tell them, if you wanted.”

Ilya knew his eyes had gone wide as an unfamiliar shot of panic rose in him. David and Yuna would see him as weak, as bad for their son, they would-

“You don’t have to.” Shane said quickly, seeing the discomfort on his husband’s face. He took Ilya’s hand in his. “I know that you haven’t told very many people, and that it’s not really the done thing, in Russian culture.”

Shane took a deep breath, studying Ilya carefully. “But they love you Ilya and it wouldn’t change their opinion of you. I told them that I’m seeing someone about my Anxiety and my eating. It helped, to know that they know.” Shane was playing with Ilya’s ring on his hand now, his nerves obvious. “I know Galina mentioned about building support networks and I just- I need you to know that that’s an option. If it makes things like this easier for you.”

When Ilya was sure that Shane was finished he brought his hand up to his chin, fixing Shane to look him in the eyes. He hated how nervous his husband looked just for suggesting something that might help.

Ilya was trying to be better at talking about it, but he didn’t know how to form the right words, not today. He landed on “I will think about it.” Before he leaned forward to press a soft kiss to Shane’s lips, “thank you.”

Shane nodded. "Okay." He let out the nervous breath he had been holding, "Okay thank you." He said quietly, giving Ilya another one of those small smiles that made his heart want to melt as he started the car.

Ilya did actually think about it on the short drive to Shane's parents house. The thought of having to say those words out loud - *I'm depressed* - made him want to be sick. And he couldn't help the surge of fear at the thought that Yuna and David might hate him. Might see him as unfit for their darling star of a son.

He knew, rationally, that that wasn't true. It didn't change the way it felt. Ilya was scared, and he hated that.

~

Dinner was actually okay. Ilya was quieter than normal, he knew that, but no one poked him or made fun, just gently looped him into the conversation with easy questions. The food was, as always, amazing, and the thing that made Ilya happiest of all is that Shane was happily eating the same meal as everyone else, and looked the most relaxed Ilya had seen him in ages.

It didn't get rid of the flat feeling that Ilya felt, the fact that he couldn't quite hold a smile, or follow along with the conversation for longer than a few minutes. But it made it easier to live with. Ilya was glad he came.

After dinner Shane and David got up to do the dishes, insisting it was their turn despite Ilya's offer. It technically was their turn, so Ilya relented, picking up his glass of wine to follow Yuna into the sitting room. Ilya was being careful, he knew from experience that alcohol made him overly emotional when he was feeling this way, and he was decidedly trying to avoid that.

Yuna Hollander clearly wasn't in on that plan.

They had only been sitting for a few minutes, Ilya in one corner of the sofa he and Shane normally sat on, and Yuna in the closest corner of the other. Out of the corner of his eye he could feel Yuna watching him. Ilya hated that when he felt this way, it made him feel like he needed to work harder to try and mask his depression, but she didn't know that so he couldn't hold it against her.

Then she spoke. "Ilya darling" her voice was soft and gentle and as Ilya turned to face her he could see the concern in her eyes. *Fuck*. "Are you okay?"

She paused for a second and Ilya swallowed, he had to look away. When Yuna recognised that he wasn't going to reply she carried on, as brave as ever. "I don't want to pry, but you seem quiet today. Is everything alright?" She reached a hand out and placed it on Ilya's shoulder.

That was what broke him, and he couldn't help his shaky inhale as a singular tear fell from his eye. He didn't know what he was going to say, he felt that unfamiliar panic feeling rise in

his chest. She was watching him, and Ilya wasn't behaving normally, he had no idea how to explain the heavy feeling in his-

"Did you guys choose a movie?"

Ilya's spiral stopped abruptly at the sound of Shane's voice in the doorway, and he brought a hand up to scrub at the tears that had fallen, desperately trying to get himself together.

Shane spotted it though, the concern on his mother's face and the hunch of Ilya's shoulders where he faced away from them all. There were a few seconds of silence before Ilya felt a warm hand slide around his shoulders from behind the sofa, shielding him from David and Yuna.

"*Ilya, you okay?*" Shane asked in broken Russian.

Ilya couldn't help the way his heart squeezed every time his boyfriend spoke his language, he loved him so much it hurt. He leaned into his touch, trying to sort out the mess of emotions fumbling around inside him.

More tears slipped from behind his closed eyes. "*I'm sorry, I didn't expect- Your mum just asked if I was okay.*" He didn't know why he was crying- not at something so simple. "*I just didn't know what to say*" He whispered, voice cracking ever so slightly as the urge to cry welled up again inside him.

Ilya half turned to face Shane, trying to stop the tears that were pooling under his eyes. He saw that Yuna and David had left the room, and he dropped his head back against the back of the sofa, looking up into Shane's eyes.

Shane leaned down and pressed a kiss to Ilya's lips, "*You don't have to speak, Moya Lyubov. You don't owe people.*" The sentence wasn't perfect, but Ilya understood the sentiment anyway. Ilya's mind started to drift as he stared up at his husband's face.

Shane always wrinkled his nose when he was trying to speak Russian, face scrunching ever so slightly as he concentrated on the words, the pronunciation. He had been trying so hard to learn it, to make Ilya feel more at home, more comfortable opening up to Shane. On top of everything else he already did for Ilya. Ilya didn't deserve him, Shane didn't deserve this.

"*I'm sorry I'm like this.*" The words slipped out of Ilya's mouth quietly, his voice wet.

Shane had tears in his own eyes now and he shook his head. "*No Ilya. You-*" Shane swallowed and closed his eyes in frustration, the Russian language escaping him when he needed it the most. "You haven't done anything wrong Ilya. I know it took a lot of effort for you to come today, and I'm so happy that you did."

He pressed a soft kiss to Ilya's forehead. "I love you no matter what, and so do my parents."

More tears escaped Ilya's eyes and Shane crossed round the end of the sofa to come and sit beside his husband properly, then he gently brushed the tears away.

After a little while of them sitting together he spoke. "Do you want to go home? I can just tell them- something. You don't have to explain it to them."

Ilya shook his head, he didn't want to lie, especially not when bad days like this are the whole reason Shane had suggested telling David and Yuna, and why he was right. "I think I want to tell the truth, I just-" He swallowed. "I can't do it."

Shane bent down and pressed a soft kiss to his lips. "Would you like me to do it?" He asked quietly.

Ilya felt that strike of dread again but eventually nodded, he knew David and Yuna wouldn't judge him, but that didn't mean he wanted to see them find out that their son had married a broken man. "I don't think I can listen to what you say."

"That's okay", Shane said, ever patient. "I can speak to them in the kitchen."

Ilya couldn't contain the anxiety that had built up in him now and he flexed his hand, stretching the muscles open and squeezing them closed to release some of the tension building in his body. The room was starting to feel suffocating. "Can I go outside?" He asked quietly, "I need some air."

Shane raised one eyebrow slightly "Of course,"

It took Ilya a moment to realise what his husband was getting at and shook his head. "I'm not going out to smoke. I just need to be out." He said, finally leaning forward to get up off of the sofa.

Shane's face of disbelief didn't change. "It's okay if you are." He said quietly.

Ilya had been trying to quit for a long time, and his episodes often got in the way. Shane still didn't like it, but he understood the value of Ilya's coping mechanisms in moments like this. That was just another way that Shane seemed to be endlessly patient with Ilya.

Ilya pulled him into a hug and rested his head against his shoulder. "*I love you Shane.*"

"I love you too, Ilya."

~

Ilya didn't make eye contact as he went through the kitchen to slip on his jacket and out the backdoor, but he could feel the concerned eyes on his back.

Shane moved slower, walking in to lean against the kitchen island opposite where his parents stood, giving them both a small smile as Ilya made his way out of the door. After it shut, Yuna was speaking before Shane got the chance. "I didn't mean to upset him Shane, I didn't realise-"

Shane interrupted. "It's okay, it's good to check in actually, he just didn't know what to say." Both his parents looked slightly confused and Shane sighed, rubbing a hand across his face.

“Ilya hasn’t been very well recently.” Shane swallowed, he hated saying that out loud, “Not for a long time actually.”

Yuna looked like she might be about to cry. David spoke softly “We don’t need to know if he doesn’t want us to.”

Shane shook his head “He said I could tell you, I think it’s important that you know. He just- He can’t do it himself right now.” He cast his eyes back down to the table, “It took him months to even tell me.” Shane still saw that as a failure on his part, still felt a twist of guilt when he admitted when Ilya had been through on Shane’s behalf.

Yuna circled the island now so she was standing beside her son, and put a warm hand on his shoulder. Shane leaned into the touch and continued. “He was diagnosed with depression a little while ago.” Yuna’s hand squeezed slightly tighter. “He has these episodes sometimes. It’s not always like he’s sad, sometimes he’s just kind of... far away. ‘flat’ is how he describes it.”

“And that’s how he’s feeling today?” David asked softly.

Shane nodded and Yuna took her turn to speak. “You two could have called it off, cancelled, it’s okay if you guys can’t make it every week.”

Shane shook his head. “I said that to him but he wanted to. He likes coming here, he loves you guys.” Shane sighed, trying to find the words. “He told me to think about it like he’s going to feel the same whether he’s at home or out or wherever. It’s easier for him to stay at home, it takes less energy, but he likes spending time here so it’s good for him to come out, you know?”

Both Yuna and David nodded and Shane plowed on “He just acts different, because of how he’s feeling. He can be quiet or short with people, and he just seems *off*, but you just have to treat him normally and be there if he needs you. Eventually it will pass.”

Shane’s mum looked uncharacteristically guilty. “I really didn’t mean to pry.” She said quietly.

Shane shook his head and stood up from where he was leaning to wrap his arms around his mum. “You probably just caught him by surprise, he gets overwhelmed really fast when he’s down, he isn’t used to people checking in.” Shane stood back and looked sadly towards the door Ilya had left through.

He opened and closed his mouth as if deciding what to say next, “especially not from people that really care about him. He never had that at home.” Shane sounded like he was going to cry, and David reached out to pull his son back into a hug.

They stood there for a moment before Yuna spoke. “Can I go speak to him?” She asked, still usually quiet.

Shane bit his lip. Ilya wasn’t always a talker, but sometimes in the right moment he would open up, or at least accept the affection he was offered. And of all people Shane knew his

mum had the most tact and grace of anyone.

“Yeah” He said, nodding slowly, “That would probably mean a lot to him, just don’t be weirded out if he doesn’t react the way you expect or doesn’t say a lot.”

Yuna shook her head, “No I know darling. I’ll be gentle.”

And with that Yuna took her coat and followed her son-in-law out into the night.

~

Ilya was leaning against the back railing of their deck, looking out across the pond that stood front and center in Yuna’s beloved garden. He was holding an unlit cigarette between his two fingers, staring at it as if it would spontaneously alight in his hand.

“I have a lighter if you need one” Yuna said quietly, announcing herself.

Ilya didn’t jump, he didn’t really move at all until he gave a small shake of his head. “Shane does not like it when I smoke.” He considered it in his hand for a moment before looking back out towards the pond and the treeline beyond, “it is...” he considered for a moment, finding the words, “‘habit’ now, to hold one, but I try not to light it.”

Yuna smiled, leaning against the railing beside him. “That makes sense.”

Beside her Ilya just nodded, and Yuna jumped at the chance to say what she needed to say. “I’m sorry if I caught you off guard earlier, I didn’t mean to make you feel like you had to tell me anything.”

Ilya nodded “I know. It is okay.” He turned to Yuna, his face illuminated by the soft glow coming from the house, he was smiling sadly.

They stood in silence for a short while, Yuna looking out towards the dark water. Suddenly Ilya started to speak, “I am not very good at speaking about how I am feeling. You asked, and I didn’t know what to say. It was” Ilya waved his unlit cigarette around as if he was trying to grasp a word from thin air. “Like a lot, but a different word.”

“Overwhelming” Yuna asked

Ilya nodded “yes, this.” Ilya sighed, and he sounded old, too old, for his age. “I am working on it. I have a therapist, I want to be better.” He swallowed and looked at the floor, “For me but also for Shane, for everyone.”

“That’s good Ilya, I’m glad.” She paused for a second, she could feel the weight of something unspoken behind Ilya’s words. “Shane loves you as you are, you know that, don’t you?”

A tiny, genuine smile quirked on Ilya’s face. “I know, he tells me almost every day” The smile faded. “But it is hard for him sometimes. I see it.”

Yuna felt like her heart was going to break for Ilya, for Shane, for everything they’d been through together and apart that they still didn’t speak about. She didn’t know if anything she

could ever say would help, but she could try. “I don’t know a lot about what you’ve been dealing with but I know Shane, he loves you and no hard day would change that. He is so much happier since you two have been able to live freely.”

“So am I.” Ilya whispered out into the cold.

“You’ll be okay, you both will.” Yuna said quietly.

Ilya took a deep breath and nodded.

“And if you ever need someone else to talk to, or any help, me and David are here. I’m just a phone call away Ilya, always.” Yuna spoke louder now, not giving Ilya any room for doubt about what she said.

Ilya nodded again, but this time he turned to face her, sliding his still-unlit cigarette back into his pocket. “I know, thank you.”

There were no tears from Ilya now, and as Yuna studied him properly she could see what Shane had meant. Ilya was flat and steady like the dark water of the pond in front of them. Earlier she had thrown a rock into those still waters, breaking the smooth surface, but now each emotion was barely a ripple in the water. It was difficult to accept, in someone like Ilya, who normally waved and roared like the ocean, full of life.

Yuna nodded and smiled, hesitating slightly before she asked “Can I give you a hug?”

Ilya nodded and Yuna came forward to wrap her arms around her Son-in-law, or at least as best she could with a six foot hockey player. “We love you Ilya.”

They pulled apart and Ilya rubbed a hand across his face, shaking his head. Suddenly he turned towards the house, placing a dramatic hand across his heart, “Shane, come save me” He mockingly called towards the house “She is trying to make me cry again.”

Yuna’s heart jumped for a second, and she felt her eyes go wide. But as she looked up at her son-in-law a gentle smile was breaking across his face.

Yuna couldn’t help but smile back, she shook her head. “Don’t scare me Ilya!” She said with a laugh, “Shane would probably try to have me kicked out of my own house, he’s very protective of you, you know.”

Ilya broke into a proper smile then. “I know.”

Yuna shook her head, still smiling. “Are you coming back in to watch a movie? Or are you and Shane heading home?” She asked, giving Ilya an easy out.

Ilya shook his head, “we can stay.” He said, still quiet.

Yuna smiled at him, and turned towards the house, “Come on then, let’s go see what awful movie the boys have picked out.”

Ilya groaned, “We should not have left them in charge.”

~

Ilya didn't really watch the awful movie in the end, his thoughts drifted as he sat, curled up beside his gorgeous husband, full of good food and surrounded by his new family. The waves were breaking slightly, not enough to dislodge that heavy feeling in Ilya's chest, but enough for him to know that Yuna was right. They were going to be okay.

End Notes

Thank you for reading!

Kudos and Comments are massively appreciated! They really encourage me to keep writing. I'm also open to constructive feedback on my writing as I'm always looking to improve (I know my writing style is a little bit odd) so please leave a comment!

Happy Holidays <3

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