

Some Comfort

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Some Comfort

by [Impractical_Magic \(sliebman10\)](#).

Summary

Ilya is feeling the effects of his depression one morning, and Shane helps him to feel better.

Notes

Well. I've now finished reading both books and the brain rot is stronger than ever. Spoilers for The Long Game.

CW for depression (nothing graphic)

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

When Shane woke up, he immediately reached for Ilya, but found his side of the bed cold. It was very early, only a few strands of weak morning light flowed through the windows in their mostly dark room. He blinked and looked around in confusion, finally seeing a dark silhouette in the chair next to the big window in their bedroom. They hadn't drawn the shades the night before, so Ilya was backlit, sitting as he was in the chair, hunched and tense looking. Shane got up slowly, grabbing the throw from the end of their bed and slid into the chair next to his husband. Anya was curled up in his lap. She, at least, picked up her head and nudged Shane, silently telling him to find out what was wrong. He scratched her ears but his attention was on Ilya. Shane thought he knew what was going on but he didn't want to assume the wrong thing. This wasn't the first time he'd found Ilya like this in the early morning hours, and it was probably not the last.

Most of the chairs in their house were large and kind of sprawling, big enough for two. This one though was a bit of a tight fit, especially since Ilya didn't move over when Shane joined him. He draped the blanket gently over the three of them. Ilya smelled vaguely of cigarettes. He must have gone out for a smoke some time while Shane was asleep. Looking at his stormy expression, the shadows lodged in his eyes, Shane didn't have the heart to give him shit about it.

"Hey," Shane whispered, shifting his position so he could pull Ilya into his side. Ilya tensed at first, but then melted against him. Shane closed his eyes, breathing him in. His fingers found the short, soft curls at the nape of his neck. "What's wrong?"

Ilya murmured something in Russian but then tried again in English. "I am thinking of my mother," he said, his voice gravelly probably from smoking and from the lack of sleep.

"Oh," Shane said, pressing a soft kiss to his forehead. "What about her?"

"Is the... anniversary," he murmured, tears leaking out of his eyes, onto Shane's shoulder. Shane tightened his grip on him. "What do you need right now?" Shane whispered. "Do you want me to leave you alone?"

"I never want that," he said.

"Did you sleep at all?"

"No," Ilya said, sounding impossibly tired.

Shane bit his lip. When Ilya's depression reared its head, he sometimes went into fix it mode, wanting to make everything better all at once because he couldn't stand seeing Ilya in pain. But they'd done a joint session with Ilya's therapist, Galina, and Ilya said that particular tendency made him feel worse, so Shane did his best to try to curb that instinct. Now, he was torn between giving him space and trying to give him everything at the same time.

So Shane didn't say anything more. He just got up from the chair, taking Ilya by the hand, keeping their bodies in contact. "Has she been out?" he asked, indicating Anya, who had leapt off Ilya's lap when he stood up and was watching them alertly.

“Yes. Took her out an hour ago,” Ilya replied.

“Ok,” Shane said. So Anya was taken care of for now. He pulled the blankets back and fluffed Ilya’s pillow before saying, “Here...lie down.”

“Shane...I don’t think I can...”

“Not for that, *mon coeur*. Just relax,” Shane said. He’d tried several terms of endearment over the years, but he always felt a little stupid calling Ilya “honey” or “babe”. And Ilya seemed to get a kick out of him speaking French, so that was the pet name he’d stuck with. Besides, “my heart” was an accurate description for how he felt about Ilya.

“Ok,” Ilya said, sitting down on the bed. He was wearing sweats and a t-shirt, probably so he wouldn’t have been cold outside. Shane gently took his shirt off and guided him onto the pillow, so he was lying on his stomach.

“I’ll be right back,” he said, going into the bathroom. Shane rummaged in the cabinet under the sink for a moment until he found what he was looking for: a small bottle of massage oil that he’d snagged from one of the hotels they stayed at on the road. He brought it back into the bedroom.

He wasn’t sure if Ilya was still awake at first because he was so still. But when he flipped the cap of the massage oil bottle, Ilya raised his head with an amused smile. “Did you get new lube or something?”

“What?” Shane asked, then realized what he meant. “No. It’s massage oil...you know from that hotel in Chicago.”

“Is the same as lube, no?”

“Well, it’s not for sex...and it smells good.” Shane said, squinting at the bottle. “It’s lavender...supposed to be relaxing.”

Ilya chuckled. “Relaxing, sure.”

Shane huffed in annoyance. At least Ilya seemed a bit more like himself “Shut up for a minute, will you?”

“Yes, ok,” Ilya murmured against the pillow.

Shane poured some of the sweet smelling oil into his hands and pushed his fingers in the back of Ilya’s neck. Ilya groaned in appreciation, as Shane moved his thumbs in circles, massaging his neck and shoulders. He patiently worked out the knots, feeling the tight muscles become pliant under his deft fingers. “You are too good at that,” Ilya sighed into the pillow. Shane permitted himself a pleased smile, knowing he was helping the man he loved so fiercely feel better.

“Maybe we should open a massage parlor when we retire,” Shane joked, as he moved down his back, moving his fingers in circles as he did.

Ilya gave a small chuckle. “You’re not touching strangers,” he murmured.

“No?”

“No. I keep you to myself,” Ilya said, his voice growing drowsy. “I’m not sharing.”

“Good,” Shane said, working over a knot in the middle of his back. “You never have to.”

Ilya didn’t respond to this, and Shane felt his breathing slowing and evening out as he continued massaging his back. Several minutes later, his hands stilled against Ilya’s skin, knowing he’d fallen into an exhausted and much needed sleep. He pulled the blankets up around him and drew the blackout curtains against the morning sun. Anya had been laying on the floor, watching them but she followed Shane out of the bedroom.

He went down to their home gym and worked out for almost two hours. He fed Anya breakfast and made breakfast for Ilya and himself. He’d gotten better at cooking once he and Ilya were living together full time. It was so much more fulfilling to make food to eat together than just for himself. Theoretically, he wanted to wait but he’d just worked out and was very hungry. He ate one of the egg white and kale omelets and left the other in the pan, ready to warm up when Ilya was ready. He read the sports headlines on his phone and answered a text from his mom. He kind of wanted to shower but he wanted to wait until Ilya woke up.

Finally, he went back upstairs. Ilya was still fast asleep. Shane was torn. He knew Ilya needed to sleep, but he also knew they had a game the following afternoon and he didn’t want his schedule to be too off track. He sat down gingerly on the bed, taking off his gym sneakers when he felt Ilya’s hand on his back.

“Thank you,” he said, peering blearily at Shane through his mess of curls. Shane covered Ilya’s hand with his own.

“Of course,” Shane said, brushing Ilya’s hair out his eyes. “I was going to shower...”

“Me too...I smell like flowers,” he said, sitting up and stretching. He pulled Shane close so their foreheads were touching. “You’re good with your hands, Hollander.”

Shane chuckled. “You would know,” he said, his cheeks reddening.

Ilya ran his thumb over Shane’s cheek. “So adorable.” He kissed Shane deeply, hoping to push all of the emotions churning in his head and his heart into the kiss. Shane seemed to understand. When they broke the kiss, Shane led the way to the shower, where they stood under the hot water, kissing languidly for a long time.

End Notes

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