

same, same, but different

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by [casdoms \(moffwithhishead\)](#)

Summary

(Read: he stayed up for 15 hours taking every self assessment he could find, reading research papers on autism and scouring social media for posts from people like him who weren't diagnosed until adulthood. It was hard to deny after that, that the doctor might have known what she was talking about.)

Notes

Nobody really talks about the way it feels to be diagnosed as an adult, and the grieving process that comes with it. Shane would really struggle with the social weight of the word I think, and with the way it changes his perception of himself, even though nothing has actually really changed. Yuna, also undiagnosed, would absolutely be like “🙄 sounds fake but ok” and then read a book that Shane sends her and be like “Oh No, I fucked up he’s SO autistic.” That’s what my mom did anyways 😊

Ilya’s adhd ass just being like “yeah, that tracks.”

From one high masking AuDHD bitch to another: Shane, you’re doing great.

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

The piece of paper in front of him says it, plain as day, and Shane feels like his brain is frozen.

Autistic.

Ilya's hand settles on his thigh and squeezes, bringing Shane back down to earth, "What does this mean? Is not something I'm familiar with."

The doctor smiles at them, "It just means that Shane's brain works a little bit differently than ours, Ilya. It's a sensory processing thing, mainly." The doctor keeps on talking, and Shane lets his mind drift further into the spiral of all spirals.

He's not autistic. He's a world famous athlete. He's not, not -

The hand is on his knee again, and Shane blinks back into the conversation happening, "I'd like to leave, I think."

The doctor's smile is apologetic, "It's a big change for you, Shane. Everything you're feeling is okay to feel. But it doesn't change anything else about your life. You're still the same capable, talented, successful man who walked into my office today."

He nods, barely listening to her, and looks at Ilya with what he hopes is calm panic.

(In reality, he looks like he's on the verge of hyperventilating, and tears are forming in his eyes.)

Ilya stands up and shakes the doctor's hand, thanking her for her time, and keeps a hand on Shane's back as he guides him out of the seat and out into the hallway. Shane lets himself be led without his usual pushback, and his brain completely checks out once they're in the elevator. He doesn't really blink back into existence until Ilya's hand settles onto the back of his neck, and he realizes that they're at their car and Ilya's looking at him like he's worried.

Shane leans into it when Ilya sets his other hand on his cheek, "I'm fine."

"No, you're not," Ilya corrects, frowning despite himself.

No, he's not.

Here's the thing: Shane's inner turmoil has nothing to do with thinking less of autistic people, or disabled people, or anything like that. It's just.

He grew up incredibly privileged and with so many resources. His current therapist is not the first therapist he's had in his life, nor will she be his last. His parents have always been

involved, active and present parents, who knew him so well that it was uncanny. They knew he was dealing with anxiety and OCD before he knew, and they got him help before it got bad. They knew that their son was obsessive and had a hard time focusing, and got him help because they wanted him to succeed.

And everybody fucking missed it.

Sure, maybe at first he was a little indignant at the implication of being disabled in anyway, but then he did some research.

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He's angry that this was missed for so long. He's heartbroken for his younger self, who spent so much of his childhood hating himself for being different. He's angry with his parents for missing it, and also holds so much empathy and compassion for them, because he was never an easy kid. And not knowing why things were so hard for your child must be so, so frustrating and gutting for a parent, to not be able to fix it.

And on top of that, this information recontextualizes every single interaction Shane has ever had with a person in his entire life. And it's nauseating to think about all of the times he was rude or callous without meaning to be. Nobody ever said anything. Nobody ever told him.

Mostly, he's just... sad.

Ilya is as patient as he ever is, and this news hasn't phased him at all. He listens to Shane rant about everything he's read, and all of the things he's feeling, and doesn't say a word about thinking about something else.

He's just present, constantly validating Shane's feelings.

"Maybe that's why the Voyagers were so quick to get rid of me," Shane says it one night when they're in bed, and Ilya's head is on his shoulder. "They saw a chance to lose their weird, awkward Captain who didn't fit their idea of what a Captain is supposed to be."

Ilya's half asleep, but he mumbles, "No, they're just idiots."

Shane hums thoughtfully, and runs his hand through Ilya's hair, "That too, definitely. But I read this article..."

He talks until Ilya is snoring against his chest, and long after.

Yuna doesn't really take it well when Shane tells her.

“You’re not autistic,” she says it so plainly, so confidently, that Shane really wants to believe her.

“Not according to the doctor,” he says with a shrug, watching both of his parents closely.

Yuna is still talking about all of the ways that Shane definitely isn’t autistic, because she was just like that too when she was a kid and she’s not autistic, and Shane can’t help but notice the way David is not looking at either one of them.

He bumps his dad’s foot under the table with his own, and smiles when their eyes meet. “Must be kind of a shock.” David shrugs with a small smile on his face, “Not really. I’m the one who had to cut all of the tags out of your shirts, remember?”

It takes Shane a while to feel... normal about it.

He doesn’t tell anyone at first, but he notices more things about himself than he has maybe ever. Like yeah, he does get really flat & monotone when there’s a lot of sounds happening at once, and it does kinda make him want to die when someone asks him a question during practice.

And okay, maybe Ilya had a point about the burger recipe. It just hadn’t occurred to him that it would be too many burgers until Ilya said something.

It occurs to him one day in the locker room that he prefers the brand of gear he’s been loyal to since he was a kid because they’re the only skates he’s found that don’t make him constantly aware of his feet.

And Hayden’s kids - Shane loves them dearly.

But he has to leave a birthday party very abruptly so that he doesn’t actually scream at the next kid who asks him for a slice of cake.

Ilya finds him sitting in the nursery with the lights off and his head in between his knees. He shuts the door behind him and just stands there in the silence until Shane says, “I’m okay.”

“Oh,” Ilya huffs, “Yes, you look great. Not at all like you are dying.”

Shane huffs and tucks his arms tighter around his ears, “It’s so loud.” A hand settles on the back of his neck and squeezes gently, “How can I help?”

“This is good,” Shane admits into his knees, and tries to regulate his breathing. The gentle pressure and the calm presence next to him helps his nervous system regulate a little more, and after a while Shane feels okay enough to look up at his husband.

“This is embarrassing,” he mumbles, pouting a little. “I can’t even handle an afternoon of kids having fun?”

Ilya smiles at him, unbearably fond, “Is very normal, I think.”

Shane asks the question he’s been too embarrassed to ask, “What about when we have kids? It won’t be okay if their dad is hiding in another room because they’re screaming too much and having fun with their friends.” The look on Ilya’s face makes him blush all the way up to his ears, “Stop looking at me like that.”

Thankfully, Ilya ignores him and drops down onto the floor next to Shane so that their legs are pressed together.

“Will not be a problem,” Ilya assures him, his smile softening. “You know how I know?” He doesn’t give Shane a chance to answer before he holds a hand up, “Alarm did not go off this morning, so you have been stressed all day. Yogurt had curdled overnight. You hate this shirt, and would not change. It makes you angry.”

Angry maybe isn’t the right word, but Shane does hate this shirt. The seams are hard and stiff and wearing it feels like a line of ants is crawling over him wherever the seams touch skin.

“Children are loud, yes,” Ilya agrees, shrugging. “Is not just the children today. Routine changed, and you picked a bad shirt.” He tugs gently at the sleeve and it makes Shane reflexively shudder, which gets Ilya to grin, “If you listen to your husband, you would not be hiding in nursery.”

Shane huffs and swats his hand away, “So what? I’m like a dog? One too many things went wrong and now I can’t tolerate extraneous noise?”

Ilya scrunches up his face, “Da. Yes, like Anya, not like dog. You have big feelings too. Is okay,” he assures Shane and grabs the hand when it swats at him again, “I love your big feelings.”

They sit there for a minute like that, just looking each other.

“Oh,” Ilya startles and pulls his hand away to grab something out of his pocket. “Forgot to give you this before the party. Is from your mother.” He drops a metal cylinder in Shane’s lap, grinning, “She got them for you.”

It’s earplugs. Nice, silicone, earplugs.

Shane doesn’t even blink, he just puts them in and immediately, his shoulders drop some of the tension they’ve been holding. Ilya’s smile is softening, “Is good?”

His voice is muffled, but Shane can still hear him. The gleeful, shrill screams outside are almost completely gone, though. “Yeah,” he confirms, taking Ilya’s hand in his own, “It’s good.”

“So, Shane,” his therapist says as he takes a seat across from her. “Congratulations on your diagnosis, I know that was something that was hard for you to request. How are you feeling about everything?”

He huffs and rubs a hand over his thigh, “Well, it’s funny that you ask...”

End Notes

just adding here that if you're like "why is shane comparing himself to a dog >:(" dog behavior is my special interest it unfortunately bleeds into every aspect of my life SORRY but it's also true!!

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