The Part We Couldn't End

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The Part We Couldn't End

by Ghostbash18

Summary

Shane and Ilya spend years telling themselves that they need to break it off. Secretly sleeping with your rival is not a sustainable habit, but neither one ever works up the courage to end it. Until Ilya's feelings get a little too involved and he has to cut ties, promising himself that he would only meet Shane as indifferent opponents during their games. No more Jane and Lily, no more sneaky links. Until Shane goes on Jimmy Fallon, wears his gorgeous little glasses, and gets on the floor in a way that breaks Ilya's paper thin resolve.

Notes

This was inspired by Hudson's Jimmy Fallon interview and a meme I saw about Ilya being pissed about it. It is also my first fanfic on this platform, and first in about 15 years since I wrote about One Direction kidnapping a messy bun girl. I don't know if I did the tags right or if this is anything at all. Enjoy or don't.

“I don’t think we should see each other anymore. Like this, I mean. It’s too complicated and just not a good idea. It was fun, Hollander. I’ll see you when we play next season.”
Those words replayed in Ilya’s brain over and over again all summer. He had been so cold with Shane, so dismissive. The look on Shane’s face when he ended it is burned into his soul forever.
But he had to do it. One of them had to be strong enough to end it for both of them. It wasn’t sustainable, that stupid, beautiful thing they had been doing. Ilya had gone far too deep and started wanting things he shouldn’t. He broke his own heart, and probably Shane’s, to protect them both.
No matter how noble his intentions were, his actions still fucking killed him. Even now, three months later, he thinks about Shane a million times a day. He has tried everything he knows to get him out of his head. He’s tried working out, drinking, fucking. He even tried reading. But everything leads him back to Shane.
Time hasn’t healed him, and he knew it wouldn’t. His mother’s death still hurts almost as much as it did when he first found her. Why would this be any different? His chest feels like there’s a giant hole in it. He hasn’t slept. He eats, but only enough to maintain his athletic shape for the upcoming season. Since the day he walked out of Shane’s apartment for the last time, he hasn’t felt alive at all.
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If something is the right decision, how the hell does it hurt this bad?
Shane has been wrestling with that question since Ilya ended things, if that’s even what you could call it. He knew it was the right call. He had planned on ending it with Ilya more times than he could count, and he knew Ilya had done the same. He just never expected either of them to actually work up the nerve to do it.
Until Ilya did, and it fucking destroyed Shane far more than he ever anticipated. Which was embarrassing and made no sense at all. They were just fucking, right? No feelings. No strings. Casual, occasional fun when they happened to be in the same place. He hates reducing it to that, but it couldn’t be more, no matter how badly he wanted it to be.
Shane allowed himself two weeks to wallow. He went to his cottage and told his parents he was on a silent retreat to get his mind right after a rough playoff loss, and he let himself be sad for a while. But enough was enough. He needed to do more than just train for the next season to keep his mind off Ilya. He’s a focused guy. He can do whatever he puts his mind to.
Yuna was thrilled when Shane asked her to book him some commercials and appearances during the break. Normally, it’s like pulling teeth to get him to agree to any kind of publicity, but she happily got to work. He spent the summer flying around the country, bouncing from one shoot or appearance to another.
He started getting attention, too. A newer fan base: young girls. They couldn’t get enough of the freckles he hates, his awkward interview answers that usually embarrass him, or the fact that he’s a young, single hockey player. His social media following tripled, despite only posting when his team won the Cup. And then Yuna finally got the call.
Jimmy Fallon wanted Shane on the show for some kind of athlete-focused episode. Players from the NFL, PGA, NBA, and now the NHL were asked to teach Jimmy something fun about their sport and sit for a short interview. Shane was nervous, but he flew to New York City, met with his stylist, and braved the horde of screaming girls outside Rockefeller Center.
“And joining us tonight,” Jimmy said, grinning at the crowd, “is—”
Ilya’s glass paused halfway to his mouth as Shane’s face filled the television screen in the

corner of a New York bar. His agent picked a hell of a time for Ilya to venture to the Big Apple for a meeting. He could spend a lot of his life safe from running into Shane, but evidently, New York is not one of those places.

He shouldn't be surprised. He's seen Shane's face on just about every ad and sponsorship since he landed back in the US. Any groundwork he made on bleeding Shane out of his system is gone.

But did he have to look this good? He's wearing a tailored black suit with silver jewelry, his hair is long and fucking perfect, and when Jimmy shows him a photo of some dumb Metros thing, he pulls out the worst thing Ilya has ever seen.

Glasses. Shane Hollander wears glasses, and he looks so innocent and corruptible. Ilya was having a hard time keeping himself — well, not hard. And these glasses made that absolutely impossible.

Groaning, Ilya finishes his drink and signals to the bartender to bring another. He can't pull his eyes away from the TV. Shane looks so confident, so happy. He's usually so withdrawn, heldback. But not now, he is glowing.

He is also on his fucking hands and knees on the floor, showing Jimmy how to do the hip stretch that never fails to distract Ilya before a game.

Ilya's mouth waters. And his cock swells in his pants. He starts to panic, the need to flee to the safety of his hotel room two blocks away coursing through him.

It's bad enough that he's alone in the back of some random bar, watching Shane on fucking TV. He can't lose control like this, too, not in public. He needs to get out of here. Out of this bar. Out of this city.

Just as he reaches for his wallet and slides off the stool, the cruelest joke God has ever played on him walks through the door.

Shane Hollander, still wearing those awful, gorgeous glasses, laughing with a few people Ilya doesn't recognize. He looks bright and open in a way that makes Ilya's chest ache, a sharp contrast to the hurricane raging inside him.

Ilya ducks his head instinctively, looking for an escape route. But no, he had to sit in the very back of the room in the furthest seat possible from the door. It made sense when he got there; he wanted some privacy. But now, there is no way for him to leave without coming into direct contact with Shane. He's fucked.

Shane feels Ilya before he sees him. Something in the room shifts, subtle but undeniable. He scans the bar without really meaning to, and his gaze catches on a man tucked all the way in the back, hood up, body angled away.

He's hiding.

From Shane.

The realization creates a feeling of something like satisfaction in his chest, sharp and fleeting. Mostly, though, there's the pull..

Shane tosses up his options. He could suggest that his group go somewhere else. He could ignore him completely and pretend like he didn't see him. Or he could relieve some of the pressure that's sat on his chest all summer long, having no contact with him, and go sit next to him.

A healthier, more self-respecting man might pick a different choice, but the grieving lover boy inside him forces him to pick the latter option.

Shane gives his group of loose acquaintances at best some excuse of seeing a former teammate in the back and moves to join Ilya. He sits beside him, and for a few minutes, they don't say anything at all.

Ilya has to physically stop himself from reaching out the second Shane is within arm's length. His hand twitches, aching to settle on Shane's thigh, to brush against him, to do anything that proves he's real and here and not just another hallucination he'll have to survive. But he doesn't. He can't. And that's his fault, even if it still feels like it's killing him.
So instead, without looking at him, he says, "You wear glasses."
Shane's ears burn. He's grateful Ilya still hasn't turned his head.
"They're mostly for reading," he says. "My stylist thought they'd play well on TV."
A beat.
"And a stylist?" Ilya says. "Mr. Hollywood now."
Shane can hear the smile in his voice. He can't bring himself to look at him yet, even though he wants to more than anything.
"Did you see it?" he asks. "The interview."
"They had it on," Ilya says. "I didn't hear it. But I saw." He tips back the rest of his vodka, throat working. "You look very pretty."
"Thanks. You look very… spooky? I mean, you're sitting in the back of an already dark bar with your hood up. It is a little serial killer." He teases Ilya. The tension breaks a bit, and they're both able to let out a few breathy laughs.
"Sorry, Hollander. Not all of us have someone else dressing them for public appearances." Ilya jokes back. And then follows with, "You didn't have to leave your friends to sit with me."
Shane shakes his head. "They're just people from tonight. I went out because everyone keeps telling me I should."
"Ah." Back to silence. Ilya feels like he's crawling out of his skin sitting so close to Shane. He wants him, he wants him so badly. Ilya might actually die if he doesn't get to touch him soon.
Shane is no better. He can't help himself from glancing down at the deep cupid's bow of Ilya's lip. He can't stop staring at the way his fingers are trailing a circle around the lip of his glass. He knows those hands, he knows that mouth. And fuck, he wants them both on him immediately.
Thankfully for them both, the bartender notices Ilya's empty glass and asks if they'd like to order a round. Ilya looks to Shane for the answer, knowing he rarely drinks.
Shane orders a beer, and Ilya signals two to the bartender, who promptly places two glasses in front of them.
Ilya wraps his hand around the glass but doesn't drink right away.
After a second, Shane raises his beer to Ilya and toasts, "To old friends."
Ilya exhales through his nose and taps his glass against Shane's. "I guess that's what we are now."
He sounds.. sad? Shane hopes that's what he's picking up in Ilya's tone. If he's sad, maybe that means he feels a fraction of what Shane does. Maybe he's not as over it as he claimed when he ended it.
He wants to push Ilya a little, test him, one last time before he can really accept that whatever between them is truly done.
"That's what you wanted," Shane says finally, keeping his voice even. "Right?"
The word hangs between them.
Ilya's grip tightens around the glass, his shoulders going rigid, but he doesn't look at him.
Shane waits, stomach hollowing, watching for anything. A flicker. A crack. Some sign that this isn't as clean for Ilya as he made it seem.
For a moment, Shane thinks he already has his answer.

“No, Hollander,” Ilya says, sharp and sudden. “That’s not what I fucking wanted.”
Ilya can’t take this anymore, the proximity, the questions, Shane. He slams some money down on the bar and takes off out of the bar as fast as he can without drawing attention to himself. His hotel is only a few blocks away; he just needs to get to the elevator, and he’ll be safe.
He loves Shane. He’s known for a while that the feelings he has are love. But for so many obvious reasons, he can’t let himself have it. He can’t let himself even pretend that he can have it.
He hears heavy steps running behind him. He knows it’s Shane, but doesn’t stop.
“You’re really running away, Rozanov? Seriously? Fuck you.” Shane calls out. Ilya wants to stop so badly, to have this out between them, to solve everything, to kiss him. But he can’t.
Shane doesn’t take the dismissal of his silence. He keeps up, staying a few steps behind him and follows him right into the lobby of the hotel and straight into the elevator. They both realize they could be seen together, but none of the workers even noticed them coming in.
“What, are you following me now, Hollander?” he spits out. He’s angry with Shane for doing this, forcing him to confront the painfully obvious feelings that still exist between them.
“Fuck off, Rozanov. Yes, I’m coming with you to your room, and you’re going to stop being such an asshole and explain to me what you meant by it’s not what you want.” He huffs out.
Shane is making that angry face Ilya loves so much, but he can’t appreciate it this time. He’s too angry himself.
Instead of reacting further, he admits defeat with a nod, and they silently finish out the rest of the elevator ride to Ilya’s suite.
He wordlessly unlocks the door, and they both step inside. Still feeling bold and really pissed off, Shane moves to the bed and throws his arms out to prompt Ilya to explain himself. If things were different, Ilya would be proud of Shane for his little show of confidence.

“I don’t know what you want from me, Hollander,” Ilya says, still not looking up.

“What I want is for you to stop being such a fucking asshole and acting like you’re not feeling this too. It’s not just me, right?” Shane says, his voice starts out firm, but he lost his resolve, and his insecurity showed by the end.

“Feeling like what? Is simple. We met up, we fucked, we don’t anymore.” Ilya shrugs; he knows it’s bullshit, but he can’t admit anything more.

“Bullshit. Don’t act like what we did was just fucking. Don’t do that.” Shane feels like his heart is being torn out again, and this time getting stomped on rather than just carried away.

“I have to do that, Hollander! You don’t get it. I have to make it simple. You should not feel anything for me. I’m not-“ he cuts himself off. He wants Shane to leave, he wants Shane to stay, he wants Shane to hit him, he wants Shane to kiss him.

“You don’t have to do anything, you can choose to be fucking honest for once! Please, Ilya, just once tell me what you actually feel.” He’s borderline begging at this point, but Shane is desperate to know.

He’d also never called him by his name before, always Rozanov; both of them feel it, they both know it, but neither calls it out. If anything, it breaks Ilya’s resolve.

“Fuck it. Fine. I can’t be with you. Ever. I know this in my brain. But my stupid fucking heart does not listen. Every fucking time we were together, I wanted more, I needed more. You’re dangerous to me. I cannot stop my heart from wanting to have you all the time.” He’s pacing now, saying the things he has thought for months, years. “So no, I didn’t want to end it. I don’t want to be your friend. But what I want and what I can have are two very different things.”

Shane feels tears in his eyes, matching the water in Ilya’s.

“You can have what you want, you can have me. I’m fucking dying without you.” Shane breaks down. Ilya shakes his head; he has barely looked at Shane.

Ilya’s having a hard time reminding himself of all the reasons why he ended it and forced himself into unhappy solitude.

He couldn’t ever go home, though his father died over the summer, and with him left his only reason to be in Russia. They were rivals, and being together could never happen, not really, not unless one of them retired early. He wasn’t even sure Shane felt the way he did, well, he wasn’t until now. He’s pretty sure Shane loves him, too.

But Shane is here, sitting in front of him, daring him to take what he wants, what he needs. He was offering himself up on a silver platter, even after Ilya had already broken his heart. That had to be something, maybe it could work. Maybe whatever this is between them is big enough to make all those other things not matter.

“You don’t know what you are saying, Hollander.” It is one last out. If Shane pushes, Ilya will give in. He’s weak for Shane, and he’s so tired of fighting.

“I do know. I know that my chest has felt heavy since you ended things. I know that I’ve picked up my phone thousands of times wanting to call you or text you, or look you up to see anything I could get from you. I know that I can’t be with anyone else, and believe me, I tried.” He probably didn’t need to mention that he’s been with other people, but a part of him wants Ilya to know he wasn’t just hanging around waiting for him. “But most of all, I know that I don’t care about the consequences of us being together. I know it is complicated and messy, but to me, this is worth more than anything we’d lose.”

Ilya can’t help the tears from falling; he’s feeling so many things. Happy that Shane wants him, terrified about what this all means for him logistically, a little pissed that he gave in so easily, and a few more things he can’t even identify right now.

He’s struggling to find the words in English to respond to Shane, so in Russian, he replies with, “All I want is you. I’m so in love with you, and I don’t know what to do with it.”

Shane doesn’t understand the words, but he can feel Ilya give in. Taking the last bit of courage he has left, he slowly gets up from the bed and takes a few steps toward Ilya. He brings his hands to his face and forces Ilya to meet his eyes. His thumbs wipe a few of the tears away, and finally, finally, he brings their mouths together.

The kiss is slow at first, tentative and timid. But then Ilya snaps back into himself and takes control, pushing Shane back onto the bed. He can feel that Shane's already hard, and despite his summer of promiscuity, he knows he's not going to last long himself.

They separate momentarily, removing their clothes at record speed before frantically reaching for each other again. This contact isn't enough, not when they've been apart for so long. Ilya moves his lips from Shane's down to his neck, causing Shane to let out a little whine from the loss of contact. Ilya has plans for his mouth later, but right now, he wants to make Shane feel good.

His hand finds Shane's already dripping cock, and he runs his thumb along the slit. Shane's breathing hitches, and before Ilya even starts to stroke him, he feels the build of an orgasm. He comes so easily under normal circumstances. But the relief of having Ilya back on top of him, touching him, kissing him, it's almost enough to bring him to the brink.

"Ilya, you have to stop. I'm not going to last at all." Shane grunts out.

Ilya does the opposite and lowers his mouth to Shane's cock. He knows Shane's body better than his own at this point; he knows exactly what Shane needs to get over the edge. He bobs his head a few times slowly before increasing his speed and reaching his hand between Shane's legs to give his balls some much-needed attention.

Before he even knows what's happening, Shane's orgasm rips through him and shoots down Ilya's throat. His body jerks, and he can't even be embarrassed about the euphoric sounds coming out of him. His moans are enough for Ilya to almost come himself.

After a few moments to catch his breath, Shane flips Ilya to return the favor. He loves sucking Ilya's cock. During their time apart, he fantasized about doing it regularly. The thought of him in his mouth got him through at least two rebound hookups, and he's thrilled that he gets to do it again.

He's gotten so much better at it over the years, and Ilya is always impressed at his enthusiasm. Watching him focus so hard on making Ilya feel good is such a turn-on.

He feels a rush throughout his body, almost like he's coming back to life after months of walking around like a zombie. His fingers tingle as Shane's tongue moves against his dick, and his hands gripping at Ilya's pecs.

Shane looks up at Ilya, the eye contact making Ilya's throat seize up. He's overwhelmed by the love he feels for him right now, the love he feels for him always. Everything about Shane screams beauty and comfort. God, he loves him more than he's ever loved anything.

"Fuck, Shane. Da, like that. Don't stop." he moans out, throwing his head back to break the eye contact. If he kept looking at him, he's sure he'd cry, and there's no way he'd give Shane the satisfaction of that much vulnerability from just a blow job. Not even now.

He gives Shane the opportunity to get off before he comes, but Shane wants to take all of him, especially after he used his name for the first time. He swallows Ilya's orgasm and

kisses his way up his stomach to his chest, then his neck, and finally takes his mouth with a searing kiss.

After a few minutes of lazy kissing, he rolls over to lie next to Ilya, both of them silently looking up at the ceiling. Ilya rests his hand on Shane's leg and lets out a light chuckle.

"What?" Shane asks, unable to wipe the smile off his face.

"Nothing, it is just like the first time we met like this. You came just as quick." Ilya thinks about their first encounter often. Shane was so nervous and probably more stubborn than brave when Ilya thought he'd chicken out.

As much as he'd liked to have fucked him tonight, it almost feels more right that it was just like their first. In a way, this is a first for them, too. They both admitted to feeling something, even if they didn't specify what those feelings meant exactly.

"How did we let this happen?" Shane breathes out.

"We were both very stupid and irresponsible." It isn't untrue, but Ilya can't bring himself to regret it.

"I have an idea," Shane starts, turning his body to face Ilya. "We both have a few weeks before pre-season training. I don't have anything else scheduled. What if you came to my cottage with me? We'll be completely alone, together. And we can figure out what this all means."

The invitation is as terrifying as it is enticing. A couple of weeks alone together would be wonderful, but they couldn't come back from it. Two weeks with Shane would force Ilya to demand forever from him. But he's pretty sure Shane knows that.

"Okay. I will come to your cottage with you. Thank you for inviting me." He leans in to kiss Shane.
They lie there for a while afterward, the city humming faintly beyond the window. Ilya keeps his arm around Shane's waist, half-expecting the familiar urge to pull away to come roaring back.
It doesn't.
For the first time in a long while, the future doesn't feel like something Ilya has to survive. It feels like something he might actually want.

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