before something breaks that cannot be fixed

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before something breaks that cannot be fixed

by justhockey

Summary

Shane is used to feeling fuzzy with Rozanov. Like he's floating higher, higher, higher. But this - this isn't that.

Shane isn't floating, he's *falling.* Sinking down, down, down below, into darkness. It feels like there are waves crashing over his head, cold and sharp like needles against his skin, and when he does manage to breach the surface for a moment, he's met with thick fog and a starless sky. It feels sort of like a concussion, but not. There's no pain, just…haziness. Just a gaping, empty feeling, right in the centre of his chest.

(Or, Vegas rewritten.)

Notes

Title from *Touch* by Sleeping at Last.

See the end of the work for more notes

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He's at the door; he's supposed to be leaving. But the thought of turning the handle - of walking out of this room and leaving Rozanov - feels impossible. Inconceivable.

Embarrassingly, Shane wants to cry. His own hotel room feels a million miles away and he's not sure if he could even make it that far feeling like this. His legs are trembling…his whole *body* is trembling, like he's been caught outside in a snowstorm without a coat. Like the chill has seeped into his bones. But this is Vegas and it's summer, and even though the air is warm, Shane feels unbearably cold.

He lists forward, barely even in control of his own body. His forehead comes to rest on the door and the cool wood against his skin makes him shiver. He's aching like he's just had the flu and his body is trying to rally, but it can't quite work up the strength. It's humiliating, the way he's acting.

If Rozanov came out and saw him like this - *fuck.*

He sucks in a breath, managing to force himself upright with about the same amount of effort that he puts into an overtime shift. His eyes are glassy with unshed tears, making everything look blurry, and he tries to blink them away. Shane reaches out, his hand coming into contact with the sleek metal door handle just as he hears footsteps behind him.

"Hollander, you forgot your-" the voice is getting closer and closer, until it cuts off altogether.

Shane freezes, a thousand tiny pinpricks needling at his skin the second he feels Rozanov's eyes lock onto him.

There's silence for a moment, and then: "Hollander, what is wrong?"

Shane wants to cry.

He's been caught out - caught in the act of wanting more than he is allowed to ask for, more than he should need. But he *does* need. He needs Rozanov to touch him again, to make this heavy, cloudiness lift from his brain. He needs to know that everything is okay, that he didn't fuck up colossally. But Rozanov is never going to want to see him again, after this. He's never going to put his hands on Shane, or make his head all floaty, or…or *kiss him* again.

Shane is overcome with the distinct, agonising feeling that he's losing something he never even had. Not really.

“Hollander? Something has happened, yes? What do you-“

“Did I do something wrong?”

Shane’s voice is quivering and weak as he interrupts Rozanov. *Pathetic.* He cringes at the sound of it, scrunching his eyes closed like that might undo it all.

He’s always been too much.

Too difficult, too different, too weird and awkward and off-putting. He’s never felt so *needy,* though. So fucking desperate for Rozanov to touch him, to tell him he did a good job, to just reassure him that everything is okay. That he didn’t fuck all of this up. And god, how embarrassing is that? He’s an adult, a professional hockey player, for Christ’s sake. He shouldn’t need his arch-rival to praise him like they’re…like they’re *anything.* Because they’re not.

Rozanov isn’t his boyfriend; this is just sex. Just casual. What the fuck is wrong with Shane that he can’t accept that?

“*Wrong?* Hollander, what do you mean?” Rozanov’s voice is quiet, soft, like Shane is some kind of wounded animal and he’s trying not to spook him.

It makes the sting of humiliation even more intense. He feels so…so *ashamed,* for acting like this. It’s pathetic, and Shane wants to shrink in on himself - wants the floor to open up and just swallow him whole. He shouldn’t turn around. He should keep his mouth shut, and walk through that door, and then maybe they both can pretend this whole thing never happened. But-

“You didn’t kiss me.” The words drip from Shane’s mouth slow and sticky, clinging to the air that hovers in the space between them.

He shouldn’t have said it. He *definitely* shouldn’t turn around and look at Rozanov. But, on unsteady feet, Shane finds himself turning to face him anyway.

He’s not sure what sight he expects to be greeted with. Maybe frustration, or exasperation, or maybe even anger. This wasn’t supposed to mean anything, after all, and now Shane is suddenly a wreck because Rozanov didn’t kiss him? He couldn’t blame him if he was pissed at Shane. *Shane* is pissed at Shane.

But that isn’t what he is met with.

No, the look on Rozanov’s face is one that Shane has never seen before.

He looks wrecked. Like, absolutely devastated. As if he’s been through the emotional equivalent of getting slammed into the boards from behind. Shocked, caught off guard, and - if Shane is reading him right - maybe even a little frightened, too.

“Sorry,” Shane murmurs. “Sorry, I shouldn’t have said anything. I’m leaving.”

“No.”

Rozanov's voice isn't loud, but it's firm. It cuts through the fog in Shane's mind - the first thing that has felt clear to him since he stumbled out of Rozanov's bed. Somehow it makes Shane breathe a little easier, makes a fraction of the tension bleed out of his shoulders. It feels good, not having to decide when his head is all hazy like this.

"No, you cannot - you cannot leave while you are like this."

Shane shrinks back against the door, shame and hurt and humiliation rearing their ugly heads all over again. *Like this,* Rozanov said. Pathetic, weak, needy…

"I made a mistake," Ilya says.

Shane doesn't realise that the hiccuping sob is coming from him until he watches Rozanov's face fall.

"No, no," Rozanov insists, taking several steps closer. "*You* are not mistake, Hollander. *I* made mistake. I did not treat you right."

Shane instinctively shakes his head, a denial already falling from his lips. "I wanted it. I *liked* it."

"But I didn't kiss you."

He didn't. He didn't kiss Shane, not even once, and now it feels like he's not even inside his own body. Like he's sunk beneath it and he's watching all of this happening from below. Rozanov *always* kisses him. Usually hungry and biting and desperate as he takes Shane apart, but - but sometimes it's soft, too. Sometimes it makes Shane feel like he's important.

It's never felt so impersonal before.

"You were so good for me, and I did not tell you."

Shane's whole body shudders, his breath coming out ragged as he asks, "I was good?"

"*So* good, solnyshko. Perfect for me," Rozanov says, and Shane wants to cry. "Can I fix this? Will you let me, please?"

Shane takes a breath, and then another, and then he nods his head. And that's all it takes before Rozanov is closing the space between them, walking right up to Shane and holding his hands out like he's about to touch. But then he stops.

"Can I-"

Shane doesn't let him finish the question, he just slumps forward - collapsing into Rozanov's chest and trusting that he will catch Shane. That he won't let him fall again.

He doesn't.

His arms wind around Shane so tightly that he can feel his ribs struggling to fully expand with every inhale. It's perfect. Exactly what Shane needs. He melts into Rozanov's touch, one

arm firmly around Shane's waist as the other moves up to cradle the back of his head. His own hands grasp desperately at Rozanov's back, terrified that he's going to pull away too soon - that he'll make Shane leave before he's fully returned to himself.

Rozanov is whispering quietly, his mouth pressed against Shane's ear as he murmurs things Shane doesn't understand. It's half-English, half-Russian, but Shane doesn't need to know what he's saying; he lets the sound of Rozanov's voice soothe him as he clings on for dear life.

When he feels Rozanov pulling away, Shane whimpers. He burrows his face into his neck, and - without even thinking about it - sinks his teeth into Rozanov's skin. It's only for a split second, just long enough to feel Rozanov flinch at the pain, and then Shane is pulling back. He can feel his cheeks flushing with embarrassment as he tries to move away, but Rozanov doesn't let him.

"Let's go back to bed, yes? Is more comfortable to lie there, so I can hold you."

"You don't have to do that. I should - I should go," Shane says. "I'm sorry, for all of this. For-"

"Hollander," Rozanov interrupts. Then: "*Shane.*"

His name on Ilya's tongue sends a ripple down Shane's spine. A wave of desire, and affection, and - *fuck.* Things Shane absolutely cannot be feeling.

But Rozanov is watching him with those wide, hazel eyes, and there's not a hint of frustration there. He isn't looking at Shane like he's a problem, or an inconvenience, or someone that he just wants to get rid of. He's looking at him like he cares - like he wants to make Shane feel better. And Shane, all fuzzy and heavy and cold, is simply not strong enough to turn away from that.

"*Ilya,*" he whispers.

And Ilya smiles.

"Please," he says. "Come lay down with me. Let me take care of you. You deserve it, Shane, for being so perfect for me."

The words make a burst of warmth flood through Shane's frozen veins. He stumbles forward, takes the hand that Rozanov - *Ilya* - is offering him, and allows himself to be guided back to the bedroom.

Ilya picks an unopened water bottle up off the bedside table, cracking the seal on it as he twists the top off. Shane expects him to hand it over, but instead he steps in close. He holds the water bottle up to Shane's mouth and then, with a gentle hand, he takes hold of Shane's chin and tilts his head backwards. It feels good, being handled like this; Shane doesn't fight it, just allows Ilya to manoeuvre him and then swallows obediently as the water is poured into his mouth.

Next, he lets Ilya unbutton his shirt and peel it off his shoulders. He lets him unlace his shoes, and strip off his trousers, and then fold them all into a nice, neat pile, just like Shane always does.

And then - then he lets Ilya tug him back into the bed he'd left, *god,* only a matter of minutes ago. It feels like an age, like an agonising eternity since he was last beneath these sheets, but in reality it's probably been less than twenty minutes.

He can't quite believe everything went wrong so quickly.

But now Ilya is pulling Shane into him, encouraging him to lay his head on his chest as Ilya slides Shane's thigh over his own legs. They're touching everywhere, miles of Ilya's warm skin surrounding Shane in a way that makes his brain go quiet. They're all tangled up in a matter of seconds, and in an instant Shane feels like he can finally breathe again.

Like he's breached the surface, and the waves have settled, and the moon and stars are finally coming out to shine.

"You were so beautiful tonight, Shane," Ilya tells him. "So gorgeous it almost hurt to look at you. Couldn't believe it - how lucky I was, that you let me see you like that."

"Really?" Shane asks, small and needy, but not so embarrassed this time.

Especially when Ilya presses several, loud kisses to his hair, and forehead, and the side of his face.

"Really," Ilya assures him. "So lovely. So good. Felt like a gift, you understand?"

Shane nods. He understands perfectly well, because what Ilya gives to him feels like a gift as well. For someone like Shane - who was born overthinking and has never known a moments peace since then - it feels like utter bliss to simply let go. To not have to worry about being in control, or acting or saying or doing the right thing.

Ilya takes him so far out of his head that, for a little while, Shane just feels free.

"Is my fault you feel like this. Cold and sad, yes? Head not clear?" He asks, and Shane hums in confirmation. "You felt good - high - but then I did not kiss you or hold you. Did not bring you back down properly."

It's a relief that Ilya understands what's happening, because Shane certainly didn't have a clue. All he knows is that one minute he was on cloud nine, and then the next he was in the trenches.

He's slowly feeling better, though, with every second he spends here, wrapped up in Ilya's arms. One of his hands is tangled in Shane's hair, playing softly with it, and the other is gently caressing Shane's arm, back and forth in an almost hypnotic rhythm. His words, and his voice - the rumble of it beneath Shane's cheek, where he's lying on Ilya's chest - is settling him, too.

Slowly, slowly, it feels like his body is coming back to him.

“I’m sorry, malýsh. *So* sorry. I should have been more careful, should have realised sooner. I did not mean to do this to you.”

“It’s okay.”

“No, it is not. Is my job to notice if you are not okay. Is my job to treat you like you deserve.”

“You do.”

“Usually, yes. Not tonight, though. Tonight I was selfish. Too inside of my own head to be good to you.”

Shane rests his hand on Ilya’s bare chest, maps out constellations between the moles that decorate his skin. Then he takes hold of the crucifix Ilya wears around his neck, holding the skin-warmed metal between his fingertips.

“Are you okay?” Shane asks quietly.

Ilya sighs, and Shane prepares to have his question shut down. But Ilya simply kisses him on the forehead again, and squeezes him tighter.

“Maybe I can tell you later, yes? But for now, this is about you.”

Shane doesn’t want to push, so he just nods his head in agreement. And even though he’s already feeling much better, he’s perhaps still a little bit too spacey to listen to Ilya in the way that he deserves.

Shane tilts his head upwards to look at Ilya, but his eyes catch on the mark he left on Ilya’s skin when he bit into him. He feels a brief flash of embarrassment, but it’s overshadowed by something else - something much more profound: *possessiveness*. It feels good, seeing his mark on Ilya. He licks the bruised skin, then kisses it softly.

“I left a mark,” Shane says. “Sorry.”

Ilya snorts out a half-laugh.

“No, kótik. You are not,” he replies, but he doesn’t sound upset. If anything, he just sounds amused.

“No,” Shane agrees, almost smugly. “I’m not.”

“Is okay. I do not mind. Feels nice, being wanted by you.”

The words are…heavy. Probably a lot more honest than Ilya ever intended to get. But this entire night is a lot more, well, *everything,* than they had planned, so. Shane thinks maybe it’s okay. Thinks maybe they’re allowed to be honest here, in the late, late hours of this Vegas hotel room, where it kind of feels like liminal space: halfway between fantasy and reality.

“I always want you,” Shane dares to whisper into the silence.

Ilya doesn't freeze. He doesn't push Shane away. Instead, he cups Shane's face and tilts it upwards, until he's looking right at Ilya. And then he leans down, taking Shane's mouth in a kiss that is slow, and sweet, and tastes like all of the things they are too afraid to say out loud to each other.

It makes Shane's whole body tremble.

He squeezes Ilya with the thigh thrown over his legs, and the hand he curls around the back of Ilya's neck. Shane would merge their bodies into one being of he could find a way to do it. He sighs into the kiss, melting beneath the feel of Ilya's lips on his own.

When their mouths finally separate, Ilya brushes his nose against Shane's, one, two, three times. And then he pulls back and plants a kiss on it, making Shane smile so much that his eyes and nose scrunch up.

"I always want you, too," Ilya says.

Shane knows it's the truth. He can hear it in the way Ilya's accent wraps around the words.

"Can you say my name again? Please?"

Ilya smiles, trailing the tips of his fingers over the freckles on Shane's cheeks.

"Shane," he whispers. "My Shane."

Shane lets out a breathless sigh, and with it the last vestiges of his sunken mood are expelled from his body. He feels back on solid ground again, here with Ilya holding him…with Ilya whispering Shane's name like it's a sacred prayer.

"I won't ever do this to you again," Ilya promises.

"I like what we do," Shane insists. "It's just - it's never been so impersonal before. Like you could have been doing it to anyone. I didn't like that."

"I'm sorry. So sorry, moya lyubov. You did not deserve that. You are precious to me, Shane - so precious that it scares me."

Shane kind of wants to weep, but his body is so drained that he doesn't have the energy. Instead he just presses in close, burying his face in Ilya's neck and finding the bruise he'd left earlier. He doesn't bite down, just worries the skin gently between his teeth.

Ilya's hand moves from Shane's cheek to cradle the back of his head, holding him there like he *wants* Shane to leave evidence behind.

He stays there for a while, his lips just resting over the claim he's left on Ilya's skin. Ilya doesn't move, doesn't say anything, he just holds Shane close like he never wants to let him go. Like they've got all the time in the world. They don't, of course. They both have early flights out of Vegas - in just a few short hours from now - and then they won't see each other for months. Not until pre-season, when the chaos of their lives starts back up all over again.

But for now…for now this is enough.

“We don’t have to, like, label this, or anything,” Shane begins hesitantly. “But - but can we stop pretending that it’s nothing, please?”

“Shane, look at me,” Ilya commands, waiting for Shane’s eyes to lock onto his own before he continues. “This isn’t nothing. *We* are not nothing.”

Shane’s eyes fall closed in relief. He nods his head, whispers, “Okay,” and then Ilya is kissing him again.

It’s so achingly tender that Shane almost asks him to stay. Almost begs him not to go back to Moscow, but to come home to Canada with Shane instead. He doesn’t, of course. He can’t, for a million different reasons. But he wants to, and he’s no longer afraid to admit that - even if only to himself.

And when Ilya smiles and traces Shane’s bottom lip with his thumb, Shane thinks maybe he’s a little bit less afraid now, too.

He thinks, maybe, they just might have a chance.

End Notes

i researched supdrop but i’m in no way experienced in this, so all my info is just off reddit!! do *not* assume any of this is realistic. love u<3

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