

My Happiness Hurts Like A Split Through The Lip

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My Happiness Hurts Like A Split Through The Lip

by [TuttleAsHimself](#)

Summary

In pro sports, getting injured is just a given. Especially when the playing field isn't a field at all, but a slick shelf of ice on which twelve men strap blades to their feet and slap a solid disc of vulcanised rubber around with big-ass sticks.

So yes, Shane is hurt. Not bad, but kind of bad. Like...in the usual kind of hockey way. It's nothing to panic about but it would be nice if Ilya texted him back with a little more concern about it. Right?

OR

Shane gets hurt and then overthinks about everything. Ilya is a menace.

Notes

Takes place some time after the season 1 finale, when Ilya has already joined the Ottawa team but the boys still aren't out to anyone but Shane's parents.

The googled Russian is all swearing or "my love", and the French is essentially just "Are you okay?" "Yes." and some fun Quebecois swearing.

(Short history lesson about my favourite Quebecois fact: Way back when, the Catholic church was a dominating presence in the province and essentially had total social control. Part of that was teaching people that religious objects and rituals were sacred and untouchable. So in protest, people started using the words for these "sacred" objects and rituals as swear words, which was considered to be incredibly sinful at the time and which tickles me to no end. These swears are called Sacres and are commonly thrown around today, but I like to think that our quiet, polite baby boy Shane reserves these for the ice when he really needs to let it out.)

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

Hockey is not a gentle sport. Any number of injuries can happen when the playing field isn't a field at all, but a slick shelf of ice on which twelve men strap blades to their feet and slap a solid disc of vulcanised rubber around with big-ass sticks.

(To put it in as basic terms as possible, which Shane rarely ever does.)

The career enders are what every player dreads—spinal injuries, errant blades, or the rare and (literally) heart stopping *commotio cordis*. These are the horrors that haunt anxious post-game debriefs. These and the small hurts that Time collects over the years, only to steamroll a guy once his prime has faded. A wonky knee, a stiff shoulder, one too many concussions. All the big and little things that eventually steal hockey away from the people who breathe it like oxygen.

This isn't one of those, Shane thinks now as he bends over with his hands planted firmly on his knees. The momentum of getting to his feet has him slowly gliding forward, a trail of blood drip-dropping across the ice in his wake. Some wounds are collected like badges of honor. The ones that look the gnarliest, but do the least lasting damage. The ones that get the home crowd *roaring*.

Sure enough, the din of Montreal fans demanding ref intervention cuts through the ringing in Shane's ears. A whistle blows in response.

Oh yeah, this hurts.

Someone has come up to his left, grabbing hold of the back of his breezers in case he can't stay upright. It's honestly not *not* a possibility. The rink wobbles a little as he takes a deep breath and regrets it, blood from his nose coating the back of his throat. That is...brain numbingly disgusting.

"You good, bud?" Hayden asks at his side, sucking in a wincing breath when he ducks his head to peek under Shane's puck-skewed visor. "*Fuuuck*, yeah that's gotta sting."

Shane grunts in confirmation, spitting out a bright red glob. Ugh, so gross.

“Ça va, Hollzy?”

J.J. skates an anxious circle around them, careful not to glide through the blood. Shane drops a glove and presses the heel of his palm to the split skin under his nose and down through his upper lip to staunch the bleeding. Fuck it stings. He tentatively runs his tongue over all of his teeth and is grateful that nothing is loose or missing.

It’s a common injury in their line of work, but it’s something Shane is kind of proud of: a lifetime of playing hockey and he still has all his own teeth.

“Ouias,” he garbles out, feeling the edges of his open skin pull nauseatingly as he speaks, “I’m good.”

Hayden is already pushing him along to the bench—still hunched over and wary of the inevitable head rush that will hit when he stands—when a trainer appears beside them. He presses a towel to Shane’s face, soliciting a litany of Quebecois curses that he reserves for the ice.

“*Tabarnak d’ostie de calisse!*”

For the first time, Shane notices that the boisterous crowd has fallen into hushed anticipation, unsure of the damage their favourite team’s captain has sustained. Just as he reaches the door to the bench, he lifts his ungloved hand and gives the arena a bloody thumbs up.

The eruption of cheers and stomping feet draws a small huff of amusement out of him as he’s ushered out of Hayden’s firm hold and off the ice toward the tunnel. Once they’re out of sight of the cameras, Ben the head trainer pulls him to a stop.

“Can you stand straight, Shane?”

He wants to ask if he *has* to but knows the answer. So he just grunts and braces himself as, *finally*, he pushes himself up to full height.

And promptly blacks out.

He's probably only out for a second or two. It's the kind of faint that pulls the blood straight from his head to his legs, *swooshing* deep in his gut, and pulling his equilibrium to the side until he's horizontal. When he comes to, it's to Ben lightly tapping his cheek and still holding the towel to his face.

"There he is. You're okay Shane, I gotcha."

A little dazed, and more than a little embarrassed, Shane leans away from Ben's hand and squints at the little crowd of trainers and medics who have gathered around him.

"Concussion, you think?" someone asks as if he's not there.

"Maybe, but could just be shock."

Shane pushes himself off the floor, grimacing at the bloody stickiness of his hand now also covered in dust and grit from the concrete. Several hands reach out to help him to his feet.

"*Slow*, take it slow."

He obeys and tentatively stands up again, but doesn't feel any of the spin from before.

“M’alright,” he grimaces through the towel. “Just got lightheaded.”

That seems to reassure everyone hovering over him, and from there they make their way to the locker room where the team physician is waiting to take over.

Seven stitches, a close 3:2 win over Pittsburgh, and a post-game debrief later, Shane is preparing to finally leave the Bell Centre with gauze taped to his face and an icepack pressed lightly against the fresh new bruising. He’s annoyed that he missed almost the entire game and he’s ready to collapse into bed to wallow a little.

The thing is, in addition to his face, he’s also nursing some bruised feelings. Once the team physician had done his assessments and stitched up his face, Shane’s first move was to dig his phone out of his cubby. Sure enough, there had been a string of texts from Ilya waiting for him. He’d flown back into Ottawa that morning after the Centaurs played in New York and he would have been watching the game from his new apartment.

L: Are you ok? That was nasty hit.

L: Please answer

L: Jane

J: Feels nasty but I’m fine. Needed stitches but got the all-clear. No concussion.

L: ok

And then nothing. No follow-up to commiserate, no words of support. Not even any light ribbing about stopping pucks with his face. Shane can’t help but feel a *little* bothered. Sure, it’s not like he’d been carried off the ice on a board again, but he *did* get a puck to the face. He’s used to Ilya being more *attentive* in their relationship now that they’re actually together, so it rankles him a little that his boyfriend hasn’t checked back in all night.

Whatever. He just wants to go home and call it a night.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to drive you?” Hayden asks again when they get to the secure parking garage, hand on his shoulder and ready to steer him to the Pike family SUV.

Shane has been given the all-clear to drive and that’s exactly what he plans to do. Also, last time he was in Hayden’s car, he’d sat on several pre-chewed Cheerios and he doesn’t think he’ll survive a repeat of *that* trauma after a night like tonight.

“Thanks but I’m fine, really. Go home to your wife.”

“But my work wife needs me.”

“Fuck off. *Go home.*”

“Fine, but text me the minute you get in the door,” Hayden demands, walking backwards to his SUV and pointing a warning finger at Shane. “The last thing I need is you suddenly dying of puck mouth on the way home.”

Shane blinks. “That’s not a thing.”

Hayden just rolls his eyes, turns, and waves farewell over his shoulder.

“Puck mouth?” Shane mutters under his breath, watching him go.

He’s startled out of his thoughts by a short but not aggressive tap of a car horn. He looks up and searches the parking garage, eyes landing on...oh.

Oh.

In the spot right next to Shane's Land Rover is a familiar red Audi, tinted windows keeping its owner well hidden from curious eyes. It doesn't matter, Hayden has already pulled out and Shane is the only one in the garage now, staring stupidly at Ilya's flashy car.

For once, it appears Ilya has listened to Shane about texting and driving. Shane feels more than a little guilty for doubting his concern.

Shane must stand there in shock for a beat too long because the driver's side door pops open a couple of inches. *That* gets him moving. He breaks into a little jog (prompting the door to close) and slides into the passenger seat, his duffle bag sitting on his lap.

"What are you d-?" he begins to ask but Ilya's hands are suddenly all over his face.

They're big hands, and rough with calluses from playing and working out. But they are impossibly gentle as Ilya tilts Shane's chin left and right so he can fix his eyes on the whole of the injury.

"*Tvoyu mat...*" he bites out. "Are you okay?"

Ilya's bright eyes search Shane's with worried intensity.

God, it makes Shane's heart almost *hurt* to see all the love behind that look. It's almost hard to breathe under the weight of it. He feels a loopy smile threaten to spread across his pained face and bites it back into little more than a twitch of the mouth.

"Ilya, I'm *fine*. I *promise*."

The other man just hums discontentedly and runs his thumb across the edge of itchy tape holding the gauze in place. The ibuprofen is wearing off, and his bruises feel especially tender under Ilya's soft ministrations but he doesn't say anything about it. Just soaks in the uninhibited concern in Ilya's eyes.

“Honestly, it’s true. Just a couple of stitches and some bruising.” Shane tries to assure him, reaching up to take a hold of his hands and bring them to rest awkwardly atop the duffle bag in his lap.

Ilya just scowls. “More than a couple. There was a lot of blood.”

“Faces *bleed*, Ilya. I can’t believe you drove all this way.”

That gets an insulted scoff in reply as well as a sarcastic rant. “Oh, yes. Instead I should have finished watching game and maybe make dinner, and jerk off to the memory of my boyfriend getting hit with dirty fucking slap shot right in his pretty face. Yes, Shane. Next time, this is what I’ll do.”

“I *told* you I was okay,” Shane says a little weakly, equal parts cowed and touched by the outburst.

Ilya pulls one hand away and waves this off. “I was already halfway here.”

“Of course you were.”

Shane is unable to keep the fond smile from tugging at his lips again but it quickly turns into a pained grimace.

“Ow.”

Ilya sucks on his teeth sympathetically, the annoyance draining from his face. He tenderly cups the uninjured side of Shane’s face once more.

“Let’s go home, *moya lyubov*. You are hurting and need a new ice pack.”

Shane frowns down at the squishy one making his hand uncomfortably damp.

Ilya takes it from him and tucks it into the side pocket of the duffle bag, which he then tosses into the back seat, ignoring Shane's mild squeak of protest.

"I could have put that in *my* car."

"Why? Your sweaty clothes will get gross over night."

That makes no sense.

"That makes no sense, Ilya. I'm not going to leave my gym bag in my car when we get home."

The thought of letting the clothes he just wore under his hockey gear fester all night makes Shane's stomach twist.

The look on Ilya's face brings Shane back to the moment. "What are you talking about? I'm driving us home. Your gross clothes too. You can pick up car another day."

Shane turns to look at his car in the next spot over. "I can drive..."

"Okay," Ilya says, reaching over to buckle Shane's seatbelt for him, like a damn *child*.

"Hey!"

“Puck clearly knocked the smart out of you,” he says with exaggerated sadness as he starts the Audi. “Now you are boring *and* dumb. Time to close your mouth, *moya lyubov*. No talking.”

“Asshole.”

“Mhmm, okay. Shhh.”

Later, after Ilya has started the laundry and helped Shane take a shower—which for the first time ever had been tenderly intimate but not at all sexual—Shane takes stock of his face.

He’s standing in the bathroom alone, wrapped in a towel, as he peels back half the gauze that still managed to get damp despite Ilya’s best efforts. He grimaces at the inch-long black cross-hatch of stitches running from his septum to just left of the wide cupid’s bow of his upper lip. They are expertly done, and the physician had told him the cut wouldn’t scar *too* badly. Looking at it now though, Shane’s not sure he believes it. The whole bottom left of his face has already turned a deep, dark purple and it just looks *ugly*.

When it had happened, adrenaline and lidocaine had kept the worst of the pain at bay. But now, hours later, his whole face *throbs*.

It looks ugly and it feels ugly.

Shane has never considered himself to be especially vain. He’s never really thought that he has much to be vain about. Yes, he’s got a hard-earned athlete’s body, which he supposes is something to be proud of as far as it makes him a better hockey player. But he’s always felt a little invisible in the face department. Features stuck somewhere between two ethnicities, lost in some liminal space between his mother’s beautifully sharp Japanese characteristics and his father’s soft but handsome White ones. Sure, Ilya calls him pretty but that’s just Ilya being Ilya. And when he calls him hot during sex, Shane figures that the sex itself makes everything hotter. He doesn’t think he looks *bad*, exactly. Just that he doesn’t look like much of anything.

Looking hard in the mirror now though, Shane suddenly feels embarrassed and a little ashamed. He hardly looks any kind of attractive now. And when the stitches come out and leave a scar that's *not too bad*? He's not sure he wants to know. Suddenly, he's aware of Ilya coming up behind him in the reflection of the mirror. His brows are furrowed and his mouth twisted in a look of consternation. It makes Shane hastily push the gauze back into place.

"Sorry," he mumbles, embarrassed but unsure exactly what he's sorry for.

Ilya's frown deepens.

"Let me see," he commands softly, and when Shane doesn't move Ilya simply turns him around and pulls the gauze back himself. "*Blyat...*"

Shane recognizes the curse word but he's not sure what it means. Duolingo hasn't covered that one yet.

"Oh, *moya lyubov*," he *tsks* and Shane is tempted to tell him he sounds like his Obaachan, but it seems weird to conflate thoughts of Ilya with memories of his late grandmother. "Why are you sorry for hurting?"

He's not sorry for *that* exactly, but he's not really sure how to articulate the real reason for this new pit of discomfort in his gut. Ilya's sharp eyes search his, making Shane's chest tighten slightly. He lets his eyes dart around to the other landmarks of Ilya's face to alleviate that tension as he tries to come up with an answer.

"I dunno. I guess...it's nothing, I dunno."

It stings his split lip to speak and he kind of wishes they could just go to bed and forget about this. But Ilya has the redressing supplies Shane had been sent home with in his hand, and he is starting to pull the old gauze all the way off to replace it.

“Wait, don’t– I can...let me do it.”

“Ah no,” he lightly bats Shane’s protesting hands away. “I drove all the way here, I am allowed to mother hen at you.”

“No, Ilya don’t. It’s gross, okay? I don’t– I just–”

Shane can’t help but start and stop, without having much of a destination for the point he’s trying to get to. It’s just...embarrassing. And *ugly*.

“It’s ugly,” he finally says and that brings Ilya up short.

Ilya slowly lowers his hand and sets the fresh gauze and tape on the counter behind Shane, never taking his eyes off Shane’s face. He’s got an expression growing across his angular features that Shane can’t identify.

“Is not ugly,” Ilya says slowly and deliberately. “Shane, this is just a cut, yes? It will heal and then...*pfft*...disappear. Gone. It will be fine.”

Shane narrows his eyes. “I say I’m fine and you don’t believe me, but *you’re* allowed to say it’s going to be fine and I have to believe *you?*”

Ilya takes a deep breath, placing both hands on Shane’s shoulders and shrugging his own.

“I don’t make the rules, *moya lyubov*. But now I am the boss–”

“You’re not anything,” Shane interrupts, earning himself a knowing smile and feeling himself relax under the comforting weight of Ilya’s hands.

“I am,” Ilya nods solemnly. “I am the biggest boss. And I say you will be fine so that’s it. The bruises— they will heal. But this cut...”

“Yeah?” he can't help it if his voice betrays the worry he feels.

Ilya shakes his head sadly, but there's something maybe *playful* happening at the corner of the very serious line of his mouth.

“It will heal too. And maybe if world is *very* lucky, Shane Hollander will have handsome little scar to remind us that he is not one hundred percent boring.”

“Alright, shut up.”

“Like eighty percent boring, twenty percent badass. One hundred percent sexy power bottom.”

“Okay, I get it—”

“Too bad you are still short though, no?”

“And we’re done here.”

End Notes

For clarification: Shane is obviously a smoke show, but he's also an oblivious little baby angel who probably never notices/realises when people are checking him out or flirting. Hence the uncertainty about what he perceives to be his mediocre looks.

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