

Kick at the Darkness 'Til it Bleeds Daylight

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Kick at the Darkness 'Til it Bleeds Daylight

by [ratpuddle](#)

Summary

It's been weeks. They've gone without seeing each other for far longer than this, but ever since they announced the charity they've been making up for lost time. Now weeks of separation feel like years.

or: Shanes no good very bad day.

Notes

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

It's been weeks. Shane had arrived home from a series of games in Florida and had only seen Ilya in passing as he left for his own in Columbus, followed by a conference on injury prevention in sport. Shane couldn't be more proud of him, but *god* does he miss him.

Shane's been counting the days until they're both together and free of responsibility. He has one last practice this week and then Ilya will be back on Sunday. Only two days left. Nearly one if he thinks about it, since Ilya's flight is set to arrive midday.

Fuck.

They've gone without seeing each other for far longer than this, but ever since they announced the charity they've been making up for lost time; now weeks of separation feel like years.

It seemed as though today wouldn't make Shane's predicament any easier.

Afternoon practice usually meant Shane had the privilege of a slow morning. Though, waking up feeling heavy-limbed, eyes thick with sleep, the bed feels particularly empty. He's curled toward the edge of the mattress instead of his normal position in the center, cocooned under Ilya's arm.

Rising is a slow and painful process, the cold air biting into the warm pocket of the bed, making Shane shiver and grit his teeth. His right arm is squashed at an odd angle under the pillow and he can feel a rush of blood return to his fingers as he moves to sit up.

Glancing at his phone, Shane smiles at the top notification.

Ilya: "Talk to you tonight. Have a good practice <3"

The warm feeling in his stomach nearly distracts from the ache radiating through his right shoulder blade, body protesting his strange sleep position.

Great.

Glancing up, the clock catches Shane's attention. 11:32am.

What?

He checks his phone again. 11:32, ticks to 11:33.

His stomach drops. Practice starts at 12.

Fumbling for the alarm app he discovers the culprit of his panic. An alarm set for 8pm, not 8am.

He practically launches himself out of bed at the realization.

To make things worse, the protein powder in his smoothie wouldn't fully incorporate, leaving a sludgy mess in the bottom of the cup, he couldn't find his compression socks, and the car was desperately low on fuel.

By the time he arrived at the rink, the low fuel light in his car had started chiming impatiently and the noise was so grating he had to take a moment to sit in silence before heading inside.

Practice was... difficult. His skates felt both loose and too tight and his favourite undershirt was dirty, leaving him with the one that dug into his armpits just enough to be distracting.

As if they could sense Shane's razor-thin composure the boys were especially rowdy today, wired off of their most recent win. Meaning there was more shoving than frankly necessary, leaving Shane with aching limbs and far more bruises than he should have after a practice.

Not wanting to go back to his too-quiet apartment, he stays late, running various skating drills until he's certain the last of the team have vacated the locker room.

His legs burn by the time he gives up, and not in the satisfying I-just-worked-really-hard way, but more in the my-body-won't-cooperate way. He can feel his body screaming at him as he hobbles toward the locker room.

He strips out of his gear as fast as possible, trying to ignore the ugly purple bruise forming on his hip from where JJ accidentally slammed into him.

Ilya would kiss each and every one if he were here, he'd probably leave his own.

Shane shakes his head, pushes his thoughts down, and blinks away the sudden pressure behind his eyes as he places his remaining gear neatly in his locker.

By the time he gets home all he wants to do is fall into bed and pass out. He forewent showering at the rink, feeling oddly exposed in the empty shower room, but now he can feel the sweat on his back cooling into a sticky mess.

Instead of giving into his exhaustion, he falls into autopilot. Showers, eats leftovers from the fridge, even when they taste like sand in his mouth, slips into his favourite boxers and a fuzzy pair of socks, and finally, blissfully, crawls into bed.

He knows Ilya will call him when he gets back to his hotel room. They've been calling nearly every night, and the tight ball of emotion that has been sitting in Shane's chest all day coils tighter at the thought of hearing Ilya's voice. He swallows hard to try and suppress the pressure building at the base of his throat.

Two days. Only two more days.

Shane is jolted from his thoughts as Ilya's caller ID lights up his screen, swathing the room in blue-white light. *Fuck, when did it get so dark?*

For a painful moment Shane thinks about letting it ring. It's not that he doesn't want to talk to Ilya, quite the opposite, but he's not sure he can keep his emotions reigned in the way he wants. Ilya doesn't need to deal with his lack of patience on top of his already busy schedule, especially when he will be back so soon.

Selfish. He thinks, swiping to answer the call.

"Hey, how's it going?" Shane is quick to speak, nearly tripping over his words in an effort to sound put together.

"Hello Shane" Ilya's amused voice filters through the phone, chuckling lightly at Shane's eager tone, like an overexcited puppy.

"Is the conference over?" Shane tries and fails not to sound too hopeful.

"What? Trying to get me home faster? Do you miss me that much?"

Yes. Shane thinks. Is he that obvious?

"I- well- you-" Shane scrambles, realizing he's been quiet too long.

"Shh, I am only teasing. Conference is done, I will be home soon" Ilya overpronounces each syllable in con-fer-ence in a gentle mock of Shane's accent.

"Asshole" Shane breathes quietly and leans heavily against the headboard.

Ilya's voice has always been a soothing balm on Shane's nerves, but after today's royal shitshow, it's especially comforting, even if he is being an asshole. Shane soaks in his low tone as they talk about everything and nothing, each of their days, what kind of breakfast Ilya had at the hotel, Shane chooses to exclude the... finer details of his day, not wanting to ruin the conversation by revealing how pathetic he feels over a few minor inconveniences.

"How was practice?" Ilya's accent curls around the end of the word in a sharp s.

"It was okay, guys were kind of rough"

"They should save that for games, not teammates. Tell me who and i'll check them next game"

"Yeah right you will" Shane smiles despite himself.

"I will."

Shane breathes a startled laugh, endeared by his boyfriend's protectiveness.

“You do not think I will? You underestimate me Shane Hollander” Ilya says in a false exasperated tone.

A small silence falls over them, Shane's soft smile drops into something heavier, he can't help but again fixate on the fact that Ilya is not here. He can't feel his strong arms holding him close, can't feel his breath on his neck. Shane feels his eyes become damp and he scrunches his nose in an attempt to dissipate the burning feeling behind his eyes. The worst part is it's not an isolated event that he can blame for making him feel this way, at least then he could feel justified.

Trying to quell his sudden wave of longing, Shane shuffles across the bed and shoves his face in Ilya's pillow, but the relief of his familiar scent never comes.

He can't smell it. Ilya's cologne, it's been too long, it's gone.

Shane's stomach drops for the second time today. Suddenly, the distance they've worked around for over a decade is unbearably far.

He can hear Ilya start speaking through the phone again, Shane thinks he's saying something about media, or maybe advertisement? but his words have become far away as if Shane were hearing them from underwater. *Two days. Hold it together for two more days.*

“-ane? Shane?” He can tell by Ilya's worried tone that he must have been calling his name for some time now.

“Shane, can you hear me? You stopped responding”

“Yeah- yeah I'm here, sorry. You were saying?” Shane's voice sounds thick with emotion even to his own ears and he cringes at how his voice cracks.

“Are you okay? You sound-”

Shane jumps on Ilya's momentary pause.

“I'm good Ilya. I promise, just tired. What were you saying?” Shane clears his throat and scrubs the back of his hand against his eyes, feeling wetness smear across his cheekbone. Fuck.

A beat, then.

“Shane” Ilya's voice is unbearably soft. Shane inhales shakily and he knows Ilya can hear it.

“Shane, whatever is going on I am right here”

“But you're *not*” it's breathy and the last word is barely audible, like Shane's throat has closed up around it.

Ilya is stunned into silence, across the phone he can hear fabric rustle followed by soft sniffing, likely Shane attempting to quiet himself.

“What do you mean moya lyubov? You can still hear me? Yes?” His tone is careful, like he's not quite sure what Shane means.

Shane has fully buried his face into the pillow now, and he takes a slow shaky breath to regain his composure before turning his head back towards his phone.

“You're not- you're not actually here. I can hear you, but I can't- you're not with me” Shane has to stop a few times to take great shuddering gulps of air. He feels like he might puke.

Shane's words send an icy lance straight through Ilya's heart, the past weeks of late-night phone calls have done little to placate the desperate longing to hold Shane in his arms, feel his heartbeat against his chest.

“Oh- Shane”

Ilya sounds devastated and Shane hears him take a slow breath.

“I miss you so much” Ilya's voice is now thick with emotion and it snaps the thin line that was holding the wave of Shane's emotions back.

Shane chokes once, making a horrible whining sound just before his body is wracked with great heaving sobs. The kind that sound painful, air violently ripped from his lungs leaving behind a deep burning in his chest. Any other time Shane would have been mortified by the horrible wheezing noises he's producing on every inhale.

It takes everything within Ilya not to break right down with him, but Shane's breathing sounds seconds away from a full blown panic attack and Ilya cannot let that happen.

“It's okay, let it out sweetheart. You're okay, take deep breaths for me. Follow me, follow my breathing” Ilya exaggerates his breathing loud enough that Shane can hear it through the phone, Shane attempts to follow, rhythm breaking on hitched inhales.

Ilya cannot help but let a few tears fall of his own at the sound, he misses Shane with a ferocity and to hear the result of their distance so clearly is tipping the thin balance of his composure.

“Good. Good job Shane. Keep breathing, just like that.” Warmth blooms in Shane's chest at his words, despite the overwhelming feeling of despair flowing through him.

It carries on like this, for minutes or hours, Shane isn't sure. Ilya murmurs a continuous stream of comfort over the phone until his cries quiet to hiccups, body too tired to produce any more tears as he slumps heavily against the bed.

“Do you think you can sleep moya lyubov?”

“-mm” Shane makes a small noncommittal noise, a heavy wave of exhaustion overcoming him as the last of the adrenaline leaves his system, too tired to be embarrassed about his sudden outburst.

There is a lull of silence before Ilya speaks up again.

“Shane, can you put the phone on speaker? Put it next to your head?”

“mhm”

“Good. Get under the covers, one pillow under your head,”

Ilya hears the sound of sheets rustling and then another small noise of acknowledgement from Shane.

“Good, put another pillow in front of you. Hug it. I know you have many to choose from.”

Shane lip pulls into a small smile at Ilya's gentle teasing and does as he says.

“No practice tomorrow so you can sleep as long as you like, okay? Deep breaths for me”

Shane's eyes droop. Ilya keeps talking low and soft, switching intermittently between English and Russian. Like this, Shane can almost pretend he's right next to him.

Just before sleep pulls him under, Shane whispers a soft “Love you” muffled by the pillows surrounding him.

“I love you too sweetheart. I will be home soon, sleep”

Ilya stays on the line until he hears Shane's breathing even out, and even longer just listening, erratic breaths now softened by sleep.

Swiping the wetness away from his own cheeks, Ilya stares at the darkened ceiling of his hotel room.

He has got to catch an earlier flight.

End Notes

Title from: Lovers in a Dangerous Time by The Barenaked Ladies (I need an edit to this song so bad. I'm gnawing at the bars of my Canadian enclosure.)

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