

all secrets sleep in winter clothes

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by [weeb_grass](#)

Summary

“I can’t—” Shane tries to speak through the hysteria, but he gets caught trying to suck in a sharp breath. “I *ca*—”

Hayden brings the phone back to his own ear.

“He can’t hear you, man, he’s freaking out.”

There’s shuffling on Rozanov’s end, then, very distinctly, he says, “Put me on speakerphone.”

Or: Shane finds out about the plane malfunction just a tad too late. Featuring: breakdowns in the locker room, Ilya's love put on blast, and Comeau being the canonical dick we all know him to be.

Notes

"And one day we will die
And our ashes will fly from the aeroplane over the sea
But for now we are young
Let us lay in the sun and count every beautiful thing we can see"

- *aeroplane over the sea*, Neutral Milk Hotel

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

The lights are always too bright during press runs, making Shane sweat through his already drenched Under Armour. He loves captaining his team, loves pushing them beyond their own boundaries and leading them to new heights. He doesn't even mind the pre-game speeches he has to give, happy to get the men he's worked so hard to make a perfect team excited about his favorite sport, his favorite *anything*: hockey. He loves hockey, could talk about it for hours, *does* talk about it for hours (much to Ilya's chagrin). He could talk about hockey with anyone, give them any stats they want, run through any gameplay. He wants everyone to hear about hockey, to love hockey, just like he does...

Except the press. He does not give a fuck if the press knows about hockey.

"Shane, what would you attribute the Metros' win to this evening?"

Jesus fucking Christ. It's not rocket science. They put more pucks in the net than the other team. Were they not there?

Shane, of course, does not provide this answer. He offers some reheated spiel about teamwork, handoffs, team spirit, something something power plays. He answers another question, similar in nature, trying not to think about the nasty, post-game sweat drying beneath his armpits. He feels tacky and gross. The game was fun, but exhausting; he's barely plastering on a smile for these people.

Please, he wants to beg. Please let me go shower and change so I can go home and FaceTime my boyfriend for two hours.

He does not say this. The follow-up questions wouldn't be worth the headache.

"Mr. Hollander, do you think your team's current lineup and playstyle will carry through to the playoffs?"

He's going to bang his head into the podium.

Halfway through some eloquent, bullshit answer he's already half checked out of, he notices a slight murmur ripple through the crowd of reporters. Some look gleeful, most shocked. A few nervous, their eyes flickering between Shane and their phones. Shane's sentence trails off like a dying flame, but he doesn't think any of them notice. In fact, he doesn't think anyone's paying him any mind, not until one reporter pipes up from the crowd, a devilish glint to his eyes.

"Hollander, we've just learned of a malfunction being reported on the Centaurs' plane to Tampa. Do you have any remarks on this news?"

Shane's mind blanks, his facial features freezing into shock.

"I—what?"

Another reporter butts in, seemingly happy to elaborate.

“We've just received news that communication has been lost with the flight carrying the Centaurs team. The last message received was that there was a potential disturbance in the left wing.”

Lost communication.

Potential malfunction.

Shane blinks, then blinks again. His mind races, caught in a loop with those phrases playing on repeat.

“I—” he tries. The reporters lean in en masse, like an ominous monster, preying on anything they can catch off guard. Their eyes are wide, jaws open with mawing teeth, sucking in a collective breath and ripping the air from Shane's lungs.

“I—”

He can't breathe, can't hear anything aside from the faint ringing in his ears. It grows steadily louder, joined by a staticky haze taking over the edges of his vision. The bright lights of the conference room sear his retinas, and he thinks, briefly, that he might be going blind. Within the haze of artificial light, his mind's eye lands on a familiar smile, dimmed by the news echoing throughout his head.

Lost communication, we've lost communication. We've lost communication.

Call me after your game, moy lyubimyy. I'll be waiting.

Cotton clouds Shane's mind, pin prickles stabbing into the backs of his eyeballs. He feels weightless, shapeless, swallowed by something bubbly and cruel.

Ilya, he thinks, watching that smile fade before him. *Ilya, Ilya, Ilya—*

“Ilya.”

Hayden towels off his damp hair, reaching for his phone to text Jackie. The game went into overtime, so he'll be miss talking to her while she makes dinner, but he hopes he can make it back in time to FaceTime during the twins' bedtime story. His thumb taps on his black screen, going to unlock his phone on autopilot, when he sees the news notification on his screen.

Ottawa Centaurs Plane Loses Communica—

The rest of the headline is cut off. Hayden clicks on it, swiping up to unlock his phone as quickly as he can. His phone opens to the article, and he scans the report quickly, eyes honing in on phrases like “lost communication,” and “potential malfunction,” and “altitude above safe landing zone.”

Shit.

Hayden throws on his clothes, not bothering to check if they're inside out. He puts his shoes on, sans socks, and races out of the locker room, ignoring the confused calls of a few of his teammates. He runs down the hall, skidding to a stop outside the press room. He walks in through the back, seeing immediately that it would be a vain attempt to shove his way through the crowd, so he plasters himself to the side of the wall, side-stepping his way to the front of the room. He can see Shane up front, his face pale, eyes wandering around the room like he's looking at— nothing. His pupils are completely dilated, his fingers gripping the edge of the table like his life depends on it.

Shit, Hayden thinks again, shuffling rudely past a band of reporters near the front. Where the fuck is their PR rep? Their coach? Why has nobody pulled Shane away from the podium? He's clearly just been told *something*, his lips moving wordlessly as multiple reporters lean forward, asking, “Shane? Hollander? Shane, do you have a comment?”

No comment. His eyes latch onto something in the middle distance, his breathing growing irregular. Hayden finally spots their useless PR rep, speed-walking across the small stage toward Shane, but not before he gets out a breathy “Ilya” right into the microphone. Great.

Hayden can't think about that right now. He makes it to the edge of the stage right as the rep makes it to Shane, grabbing his elbow to pull him toward the back exit. But Shane, eyes wild and apparently still fully in charge of his limbs, grips the microphone and asks, “Is he okay?” The PR rep tugs at him harder, but he plants his feet, fist clenching the base of the microphone. “Is he— are they gonna be okay?” His voice is frantic, shoulders tense. Hayden watches as half the room scribbles away on their notepads like a bunch of emotional leeches. But, he can't think about that right now. He rushes onto the stage, grabbing Shane's other arm to help the PR rep guide Shane away from the podium.

“Hey, man. C'mon. C'mon, we gotta go buddy, c'mon.”

The familiarity of his voice must soothe Shane because he unfurls his fingers from around the microphone and allows Hayden to walk him off the stage in a daze. When they get to the exit, the PR rep shoots him a “what the fuck??” look, but he shakes his head, throwing his arm over Shane's shoulder and half-hauling him through the door. Luckily, this is the player entrance, so the reporters can't hightail after them, but he still rushes them through the hall, lest they meet anyone else who wants to speak to Shane.

Shane, who is currently fisting the hems of his sleeves. Whose breathing has grown irregular, the unsteady heaving of his chest jostling Hayden's arm. They make it to the locker room, which is really about as far as Hayden's plan got, a fact made abundantly apparent when they soldier through the doorway and they come face-to-face with a large number of freshly showered Metros.

Shit, Hayden thinks again, for what feels like the hundredth time that evening?

“Capitaine?” J.J. asks, standing at his locker with his shirt half-buttoned. He's got his phone out, thumb mid-text. “Capitaine, what—”

Shane practically lurches out of Hayden's grip, barreling through his confused teammates to reach his cubby. He grabs his phone, unlocks it, and frantically thumbs at the screen. Hayden

smiles uncomfortably at the rest of his team, knowing his expression is probably coming off as deranged. He steps through the locker room more delicately than Shane had, practically tiptoeing through the carnage of dirty socks and abandoned pads. Half the eyes of his teammates are on him, the other half on Shane. This is, potentially, about to get very, very bad.

“Shane?” Hayden tries, reaching out to rest a hand on his friend's hunched shoulder. “Buddy? Hey, why don't we check that in the car—”

Too late. A sharp cry leaves Shane's lips, his phone chattering to the floor. Hayden kneels to grab it before anyone else in the locker room can see whatever's on the screen. He doesn't rise, as Shane's fallen to his knees, the palms of his hands pressed to his eyes, forehead squeezed against the back of his cubby. Hayden checks the screen and can't help the sharp intake of breath whistling through his teeth as soon as he reaches the second sentence.

I love you. Always. Maybe from the first time I saw you.

I am thinking only about you right now. A million memories. Thank you for those. Whatever happens, I am with you. Safe in your heart. I believe it.

Okay. Okay, so this is not good.

“Shane— hey, Shane?” He tugs at Shane's shoulders, grips his neck. He only succeeds in turning him. Shane sits, butted up against the cubby space, knees bent so he can lean his forehead against them. His shoulders are hunched, breaths coming out sharp and irregular. His hands grip his shins tightly, fingers turning white with pain.

“Captain?” Somebody asks. Jacques, Hayden thinks absentmindedly. He makes a waving motion with his hand, hoping it conveys “go the fuck away” well enough. No dice. Nobody moves, the locker room eerily silent aside from Shane's erratic breaths.

Hayden knows a panic attack when he sees one. Still, it's not like he really knows what to do. He feels like saying “calm down” will only make the situation worse, but he really just needs Shane to *breathe* right now.

He looks at the phone in his hand, a fruitless attempt at salvaging the situation. But maybe—?

He swipes to Shane's call log and taps on Lily's name. He's immediately sent to voicemail.

Fucker, Hayden thinks maliciously. *Fucking— I swear to God, Rozanov, if you fucking died—*

An incoming call comes in, an unknown number. Hayden hits “ignore,” then tries Rozanov again.

This is Ilya. I will not listen to your—

“*Fuck!*” Hayden spits, tossing the phone to the floor. He shuffles his position, leaning back so that he can drape his arm over Shane's shoulder. He leans in to speak directly into Shane's ear.

“Shane? Hey, Shane? I need you to breathe, okay? You're barely getting air in there, and I'm really worried.”

Shane shakes his head, hands sliding up from his eyes to grip the hair at his temple.

“I c—” he tries, the words coming out a wail. His body has started to shake, and Hayden can feel the shivers tickling the right side of his torso. “I— I can't—” another unsteady breath, not held long enough to get oxygen to his lungs.

“Shane, *please*—”

“Hayd.” Somebody to Hayden's left— Brodey? He doesn't know— hands him a buzzing phone. “Whoever it is, they're pretty insistent.”

Hayden grabs the phone with his left hand, the other rubbing up and down Shane's back like the soothing gesture will help anyone. When he answers, he spits a curdled “What!” through his teeth.

“Pike, where the fuck is my boyfriend?”

Relief floods Hayden's mainframe. He's never been happier to hear Rozanov's stupid asshole voice than he is right now.

“Fuck, oh, thank fuck, Ro—” Hayden stops himself, pivots, speaks again. “Here, um, here, he's right here.” Hayden moves the phone away from his ear, positioning it near Shane's bunched-up shoulder. “Shane? Hey, buddy? He's here, he's right here, but I need you to— man, I really need you to breathe.” Hayden's hand moves to Shane's forehead, trying, with as little force as possible, to lift his head. Shane jerks away, slamming the back of his head into the side of the cubby. His breaths stutter, trip. Hayden brings the phone as close to Shane's ear, then speaks into the little speaker. “I'm gonna need you to talk, man. Talk.”

Hayden pulls back, hearing garbled words coming from the phone's tiny speaker, but Shane's shaking his head, pressing his forehead back to his knees. His breaths are now coming out in hiccups, tears wetting the material of his undergarments.

“I can't—” he tries to speak through the hysteria, but he gets caught trying to suck in a sharp breath. “I *ca*—”

Hayden brings the phone back to his own ear.

“He can't hear you, man, he's freaking out.”

There's shuffling on Rozanov's end, then, very distinctly, he says, “Put me on speakerphone.”

Hayden's mind blanks, his wide eyes drifting away from Shane's prone form. Around them stands almost the entirety of their team, each member standing stock still, waiting for a pin to drop. He swallows thickly, voice shaky when he replies.

“I, um, I don't really think that's a good—”

“Pike, put me on fucking speaker before I leap through this phone and—”

Hayden pulls the phone away from his ear with both hands like it’s stung him.

“Okay! Okay, Jesus, you fucking prick.” He shakes his head, clicking the speaker button and pushing the phone in Shane’s direction once more. “You’re on.”

A moment passes between Hayden’s parting words and Rozanov’s voice. A moment, filled with another ragged breath, exhaled like a choked-out sob. Shane’s face has completely paled, his fingers shaking where they grip his legs. Hayden’s surprised he hasn’t passed out from lack of oxygen at this point, so he can’t say he’s ungrateful when he hears a soothing “*Sweetheart*,” drip from the phone speaker in that thick, Russian accent. Hackles rise throughout the locker room, but Hayden ignores the newfound tension, focusing intensely on the slight tilt of Shane’s head, his eyes peeking out from behind his knees, searching frantically for the voice’s source. Hayden’s about to tell Rozanov to keep going, but is relieved of his duties when Rozanov follows with: “Is okay, moy lyubimyy, is all okay. I am right here.”

Shane’s hands slide up his shins, like he might reach for the phone, but he seems to think better of it, letting them stay where they are. His head, however, stays tilted. He’s listening.

“His breathing is so heavy,” Rozanov says, worry seeping into his tone. The sentence is muffled, like he’s speaking to someone off-speaker. It’s only a moment, though, before he returns with a sharp, “Pike, I need you to take his hand. Press it to your chest, palm down, and get him to breathe with you, da? He is having a panic attack, but you can get him breathing.”

Hayden looks at the hand holding Shane’s phone, the other wrapped around Shane’s shoulder. He fumbles.

“I, uhh—”

“I got it,” comes J.J.’s heavily accented voice. He steps over the bench, settling onto his knees at Shane’s right side. “I got you, c’mon Capitaine.” He tugs one of Shane’s hands to his chest (it looks as though he really didn’t have to put up much of a fight) and holds it there, palm to his heart, fingers splayed out across his sternum, just as Rozanov had requested.

“Okay,” Hayden nods, turning back to the speaker. “Okay, we’re there.”

“Good,” Rozanov’s voice softens again, and Hayden knows Shane is the only recipient of that kindness. “Good, sweetheart, is good. Now breathe with us, yes? Come on, I can hear you. Sound like a dying horse. Go slower, slower.” Rozanov takes in an exaggerated deep breath over the phone. J.J. mimics him, and the three of them sit there, breathing in and out, until Hayden feels Shane’s shoulders stop quaking. His breathing slows, in through the nose, out through the mouth. Hayden watches as his fingers curl slightly against J.J.’s chest. After what feels like a lifetime, but in all actuality has probably only been about three or four minutes, Shane’s heaves soften into deep, heavy breaths. He turns his face back to his knees, pressing his forehead to them again. Hayden’s worried the panic attack is about to backslide, gearing himself up for another pep talk, when he speaks.

“Ilya.” It’s spoken so quietly, huffed out between breaths. The “Il-ya” broken up by a steady breath. He keeps breathing after that, swallowing around fear that must no doubt be bubbling up, ready to be voiced.

“There you are,” Rozanov pauses his exaggerated breaths to speak. “Pike, keep breathing for him,” he instructs, Hayden and J.J. sharing a knowing look. J.J. keeps up the front, pushing his chest in and out in an exaggerated manner so Shane can keep time on his own breaths. Rozanov must intuit that he needs to keep speaking, keep distracting Shane from his unwarranted fear.

“I’m okay,” Rozanov promises, his voice sounding louder now that it’s not in such heavy competition with Shane’s erratic breathing. “Everyone is okay, we just had a bit of a scare, but the plane has landed. We’re just waiting to get off.”

Shane nods, like Rozanov can see him. The silence doesn’t deter Rozanov, and he continues on conversationally: “My phone broke during flight. I am sorry I didn’t get to you sooner. This is Haas’ phone.” Shuffling sounds from the other end of the line. Then:

“Hi, Ilya’s boyfriend!” The bright, chipper voice of the Centaurs’ youngest player rings in through the speaker. More shuffling, and Rozanov’s voice is coming back through again.

“It was nothing, kotik, just a little issue with plane. But I am safe. I am here and I am safe.”

Shane shifts his weight, his fingers flexing beneath J.J.’s sturdy grip.

“Ilya,” he says more confidently, his breathing normalizing little by little. He’s opened his eyes, tilting his head a bit to blink in Hayden’s direction.

“Yes, I am right here. Just waiting to deboard.”

Shane blinks again, heavy, like a cat rising from a nap. His lashes are still damp with tears, cheeks flushed from where they’ve rubbed against his knees.

“You’re okay,” Shane says, voice barely above a whisper, but it carries across the entire room.

A deep sigh of relief rushes through the phone speaker.

“Yes, yes, I am okay. Just keep breathing, Shane, I am okay.”

“I—” Shane’s breath hitches, his shoulders tensing up again beneath Hayden’s arm. “Ilya, I thought—”

“Ah, shh shh, none of this. I am fine. We are all fine. I promise. I would FaceTime you, but Haas’ phone is at low battery. But I promise you, baby, I am okay.”

Shane takes a deep breath, settling back into rhythmic breathing. He tucks his face against his chest, nodding minutely.

“Okay,” he breathes out, the words shaky with relief. “Okay.” He stays quiet after that, still trying to match his breaths to J.J.’s steadfast rhythm.

“Was boring flight, really,” Rozanov continues on in that false conversational tone. “Watched your game on shitty airplane wifi though. Watched you score that beautiful hat trick second quarter.”

“Mm,” Shane mumbles to his knees, but Hayden can see the smile slipping into his expression.

“Poor block from your left wing in third quarter, though. If your ribs are bruised when I get home, I’m coming for Drapeau’s head.”

Shane’s shaking his head, his expression very clearly fond.

“Not—” he sucks in a breath, “—his fault.”

“Hmm,” Rozanov hums, noncommittal. “Sure. Well, either way, was good game. Saw your little trick near the end there, with that last goal. Don’t think I didn’t notice. You stealing my play style now?”

“I wear—” another pause, another deep breath, “—it better.”

A sharp bark of a laugh comes through from the other end of the line. Hayden takes a moment to relax his shoulders, tuning out of the one-sided banter to chance a glance around the locker room. They’ve been sitting long enough that others have continued to dress, though their eyes refuse to leave Shane. Most are still standing, though, still watching, presumably waiting for the other shoe to drop. Comeau’s still got half his shirt unbuttoned, his fingers gripping the hem of his shirt between white-knuckled fists. Nobody’s saying anything, no whispered comments or questioning gestures. They’re all just staring, taking in the conversation with slack jaws and wide eyes. Hayden turns his head back toward Shane, happy to see his head’s finally perked up. He’s resting the back of it against the edge of his cubby, eyes closed, listening to Rozanov drone on about another play he made during the game.

“... spoke to Yuna. We both think you need to work on your footing if you’re going to keep pulling that move.”

“Right,” Shane huffs out a laugh, smiling at nothing, as his eyes are still closed. “Okay, babe.”

There’s silence from the other end of the line, broken only by a few huffs of breath. Then: “How are you? Are you feeling better? Pike, he is breathing?”

Hayden nods his head uselessly, then clears his throat.

“Yeah, uhh— yeah, getting a lot steadier.”

“Good, good,” Ilya hums. “I promise I will FaceTime soon. As soon as we get off this stupid plane.”

“Okay,” Shane says softly. The arm he still has wrapped around his legs finally moves, and he brings his free hand up to wipe at his eyes with the back of his sleeve.

“Ilya,” he says, quiet, like he’s pretending they’re alone. “I was so scared. Your message—”

“I know,” Rozanov breathes, the words heavy and raw, echoing throughout the locker room, too loud for the intimacy they reveal. “I know, sweetheart, I am so sorry. I did not mean to scare you. I just wanted you to know.” A pause, a swallow, heard even through the shitty phone reception. “I wanted you to know I love you. That I always love you. I am sorry.”

Shane shakes his head, his eyes growing wet again. But his breathing doesn’t accelerate, and Hayden takes the little wins where he can.

“Shane I— *Blyat*— listen, baby, Haas’ mama is calling. He’s only got a little battery left, so I need to let him call her, yes? She is probably just as worried.”

Shane’s eyes fly open, locking onto the phone. His breath stutters, and J.J. nearly drops his hand when his body lurches in Hayden’s direction.

“No— Ilya—”

“Ssshhh, shh shh, is just a few minutes, I promise. We are safe. We have landed. But Haas’ mama must be very worried, da? But I will call you. I promise, I promise.”

Shane pauses, taking a few steadying breaths. When he speaks, it’s to Hayden’s side.

“Okay,” it comes out faint, but steady. He pulls his hand away from J.J.’s grip, smoothing his palms down his thighs as he takes in another deep breath. “Okay.”

“Okay,” Rozanov repeats. “I will be right back, moy lyabimyy, keep your phone on you.”

“Right,” Shane nods, like there was any question of *that* not happening.

“Shane,” Rozanov says, that soft, breathy sort of voice Hayden’s only heard a handful of times. Only for Shane. Only ever for Shane. “I love you, so much. So, so much. I will be right back.”

“Yes,” Shane replies. “Yes, yes. Okay. I love you too. Fuck, Ilya, I—”

“I know,” Rozanov cuts him off. There’s a muffled voice from the other end of the line, words filtering through without meaning. “Please” and “five minutes” being two of the few that register. “Listen, Shane, I must go, okay? I love you so so much. I will call. I promise. I will call.” The line is cut off, and Shane’s head drops back against the cubby’s edge. His eyes close again, and he lets out a long, shaky breath. He flexes his fingers, letting them fall to his sides limply. Tension is released all throughout his body, and Hayden’s happy to see him relax into his seated position.

For a moment, nothing happens. Nobody speaks. Then—

“Um, what the fuck was that?”

Hayden's eyes flash to Comeau, who's looking at Shane with an expression of pure repulsion. Others in the room begin to move, shifting their weight uncomfortably. Evans wipes his hands on his pants, looking everywhere except at Shane. Scott turns toward his locker, rifling through it like he isn't already fully dressed. It's J.J. who speaks, talking to Shane while resting a supportive hand on his shoulder.

"Capitaine, you don't owe us any explanations right now." He locks eyes with Hayden, and they share a knowing look. "Just get back to your hotel room, yes? We'll talk later."

"Talk later?" Drapeau scoffs, all heads snapping in his direction. "Talk *now*, Hollander. I'm with Comeau, what the fuck was that?"

"None of your fucking business, Drapeau," Hayden spits, unwrapping his arm from around Shane's shoulders to start packing up their bags. Rozanov said he'd call back, and Hayden wants to get Shane to a less vulnerable location for a FaceTime.

"Oh? It's not my business? Our captain is fucking *Rozanov*, the fucking *dirtiest motherfucker in this league*, and it's not my fucking business?"

"Sounds like they're doing a bit more than fucking," comes Evan's snarky response.

"How long has this," Comeau waves his hand around in Shane's direction, "been going on?"

Shane lets out a shaky laugh, tilting his head to the side to smile lazily up at Comeau. Hayden tries to intervene.

"Shane, man, you don't have to answer to any of this."

But Shane waves him off, looking far too relaxed for a man who just suffered a full-blown panic attack.

No, not relaxed. *Relieved*.

"Long," is all Shane offers, closing his eyes and rolling his neck to the right, then the left, stretching his tense shoulders.

"Oh? And you didn't think to tell us? You didn't think it was important that we know your fucking a literal—"

"Comeau!" J.J. snaps, whipping his head around to glare at their audience. "Dude, shut the fuck up!"

"What? I just want to know! Have you been throwing games for him, Hollander? How deep does this go? I think we, your team, have a right to know."

Shane lets out another huff of laughter, most of it just a sharp breath out his nose. Hayden's finished packing, and he leans down, hoping to get Shane out of the locker room before the situation grows worse.

“Comeau,” Shane says through a smile. He opens his eyes, dopey expression finding Comeau easily. “I don’t give a fuck what you think right now.”

Which, fair. He did just go through all five stages of grief in like twenty minutes. Still, Hayden needs to get his friend out of this locker room ASAP, and said friend isn’t exactly making this easy.

Comeau, at least, looks momentarily stunned. He stutters, long enough for Hayden to pull at Shane’s elbow, indicating that he needs him to stand. Shane does, letting out a deep breath as he rises. J.J. grabs his bag, then reaches to tug Shane’s off of Hayden’s shoulder. Hayden sends him a grateful look, happy to have his arm free so he can steer Shane toward the exit.

“Hey, no, we’re not done here,” Drapeau seethes. He reaches for Hayden’s arm, but Hayden shakes him off, a little too violently. He can see the shock in his teammates’ faces as they pass by.

“We are so done here,” he huffs, getting Shane through the small crowd and finally, *finally*, to the exit. Shane’s difficult to direct, his movements sluggish and his feet tripping over themselves, but Hayden knows it’s the adrenaline. He doesn’t even want to *know* what kind of state he’d be in if the roles had been reversed. If it had been Jackie on that plane, sending that Instagram message. He shudders just thinking about it.

He bolsters their way through the door, happy to get Shane away from the prying eyes of their teammates. They round the corner, walk down the long corridor leading them out toward the parking lot, and just barely make it to the entrance when Shane’s phone lights up with a FaceTime request. The number isn’t saved in his contacts, but Hayden knows who it is immediately. Shane answers, that dopey grin never leaving his face as Hayden and J.J. get him out of the entryway and help him navigate toward Hayden’s rented car.

Hayden shares another knowing look with J.J. over Shane’s shoulders. Whatever happens from here on out, Shane’s got at least two friends standing behind him. He won’t take the fall alone.

End Notes

"Now how I remember you
How I would push my fingers through
Your mouth to make those muscles move
That made your voice so smooth and sweet"

a/n: watch as the author walks the fine line between "autistic shutdown" and "infantilizing an autistic asian man." will she succeed? it's up to the readers.

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